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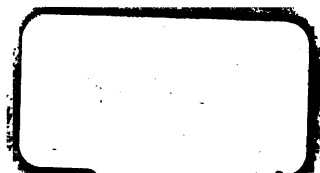
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HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL
M E M O I R S
OF THE
LIFE AND WRITINGS

François Marie Armet

M. DE VOLTAIRE:

INTERSPERSED WITH NUMEROUS
ANECDOTES, POETICAL PIECES, EPIGRAMS and
BON MOTS, little known, and never before published
in English, relative to the LITERATI of France.

PARTICULARLY
THE LIFE OF THE CELEBRATED
J. B. R O U S S E A U,
AS WRITTEN BY VOLTAIRE;
AND THE HISTORY OF THE FAMOUS
LIBELLOUS COUPLETS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF
D O M C H A U D O N

L O N D O N

PRINTED FOR C. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON,
PATER-NOSTER ROW.

MDCCLXXXVI.

REF ID: A66666 No. 5 7 9 2 '09

ROY W. B. B.
J. B. B.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE effect of great literary reputation is such that the world is better pleased with anecdotes, concerning eminent writers, than the exploits of warriors, whose fame has been acquired in distant countries. The slightest remains, in verse or prose, which relate to the life of M. de Voltaire, or the history of his works, are, at present, much more sought for than the heroic deeds of Zingis-Khan. This consideration has induced us to publish the following Memoirs: they have been collected by three men of letters, all well informed, who make no pretensions, except to truth and simplicity; and who relate the good and ill they know with equal candor.

M. de Voltaire is sometimes judged, in the following work, with rigid equity. Some traits of his character and conduct are examined, which are not so indifferent

to the public as might, at first, be imagined. Having had the most powerful influence, over the opinions of the age in which he lived, it may, perhaps, be essentially necessary to know whether some of the opinions he published, relative to religion, and its advocates, did not originate in pettishness, resentment, or a desire to dogmatize. The following Memoirs may lead to the solution of this question ; and authors more capable may, hereafter, finish what we have begun.

Many of the most distinguished men of letters were, likewise, attacked by him ; and treated with severity, bordering on injustice. The graces of his imagination, and the vivacity of his wit, interested even those in his behalf who ought to have been the first defenders of the persons he assaulted. Whether he was right, or wrong, will best be seen by reading the facts, for and against. We have inserted some pieces, of this kind, by Voltaire, which were unknown, and which are written with that elegant

elegant perspicuity, that agreeable and poignant manner which so particularly stamp the works of M. de Voltaire.

A long preface were superfluous, at the head of a work of which so extraordinary a man is the subject : his name, alone, is a recommendation, to the curious reader, and the impartiality of the following anecdotes will ensure the approbation of the equitable.

That which Voltaire himself said of Corneille has been remembered as a rule—
 “ What good should I do him by flattery;
 “ what ill by sincerity ? Truth is preferable to Corneille ; and we ought not
 “ to deceive the living out of respect to
 “ the dead.”

Thus far the French writer speaks for himself ; the translator will just add a few words. It ought to be remembered that the author, or, as he modestly calls himself, editor of the following Memoirs, is a monk ; and though, perhaps, more free from prejudice and partiality than we have
 reason

reason to expect, in a character of that description, yet not wholly so, in what concerns religion. His relation of M. de Voltaire's last illness, recantation and death, may properly be called the Priest's relation. The men of letters, most intimate with Voltaire, and who were continually present with him, during his sickness, give a very different account. In fact, there seems to have been a kind of combat, between the priests and the philosophers, for the soul of M. de Voltaire. Every stragem was used, by the former, to bring him to a recantation, and make him abjure those doctrines and writings, at his death, by which they had been so repeatedly attacked and ridiculed, during his life. The philosophers, on their part, wanted to outwit the priests, and have M. de Voltaire enjoy all the ceremonials they thought his due, rather, perhaps, as a citizen than a christian, in the church's despite. The artifices employed by both parties redound not much to the credit of either; and certainly contributed to embitter the last moments

moments of M. de Voltaire. The philosophers ought to have had more philosophy, the christians more christianity; that is to say, more charity and less rancour. That M. de Voltaire went out of the world reluctantly there is little reason to doubt. Every circumstance of his life informs us that, as his genius was great, so, his vanity was unbounded; and this had been so abundantly fed, during the short time he lived, after his last return to Paris, that his reluctance to quit the delicious banquet inspired, at certain moments, not only repining and grief, but even passion and extravagance.

No man, during his life, had, at different times, been so much or so little a philosopher; and could any instance have proved the opinion that man is composed of two natures, a good and an evil, it would have been M. de Voltaire.

With respect to his burial in consecrated ground, and the disputes concerning it,
we

we shall only add, they were equally unworthy philosophy and christianity.

The same farce was again repeated, at the death of M. d'Alembert; though, the object not being of equal magnitude, the disputants were not equally obstinate and enraged.

Curiosity has been so eager, and unremitting, in its researches, concerning M. de Voltaire, that to find no repetition, whatever, of anecdotes before made public, in a work which approaches more the form of a regular life, though it assumes the modest title of Memoirs, than any hitherto published, can neither be expected nor hoped. But that many facts little known, poetical pieces, repartees, and epigrams, now first collected, will be found here, and that these Memoirs contain materials to furnish the reader with a full and compleat portrait of the man, may, without presumption, be asserted.



HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL
MEMOIRS, &c.

FRANÇOIS MARIE AROUET DE VOLTAIRE, member of the French academy, and of almost all the academies in Europe, was born at Paris, November 20, 1694. His family appertained to the long robe, and his father, at first notary to the *Chatelet*, and afterwards treasurer to the *Chambre des Comptes*, at Paris, was equally respectable for his learning and his office. His house was the rendezvous of the literati. Madame Arouet (Marie-Marguerite d'Aumart of a family of distinction) added to her personal charms an excellent understanding : she was every way deserving her husband, and worthy to be the mother of the greatest poet of his age.

B

At

At the birth of M. de Voltaire, though he afterwards attained to the age of 84, his life was despaired of, and having received half baptism, the completion of the ceremony was put off for several months.

Apollo appears to have presided over the infancy of M. de Voltaire. He stammered verses almost as soon as he could speak; that is, at six years old. Others have rhimed from inclination and labor, he was a poet in spite of himself.

He was very early sent as a boarder to the college of Louis le Grand, where he began his literary career with uncommon splendor. He gained almost all the prizes, and wrote with equal facility in verse and prose. The two professors of rhetoric, were Father le Jai, author of a dull compilation for the use of colleges, and Father Porée, well known for his abilities in rendering learning and virtue amiable. These two, during the seven years he was under their tuition, bestowed much pains to inspire him with respect for the sublime truths of religion, but without success. Young Arouet began, at the age of twelve, to advance those principles and indulge in those sarcasms with which so many of his works have since abounded; and it is a fact, that Father le Jai, even then, predicted, he would become the standard bearer of infidelity.

What

What gave these Jesuits the greatest uneasiness, concerning the sentiments so early shewn by M. de Voltaire, seems to have been, that they were thereby deprived of the hopes of his joining their society ; which, it is well known, endeavored to attach to itself every scholar of promising talents, and those of M. de Voltaire appeared to be of the first order ; but he disregarded all their caresses, and disappointed all their schemes, by his open avowal of his principles.

The character of Father Porée, a man of a mild and insinuating disposition, was much more agreeable to young Arouet than that of Father Le Jai, who was a mere pedant without any knowledge of the world. With the former he maintained an intimacy as long as he lived, and there remain several letters to that Jesuit, which prove he always carefully cultivated his friendship ; and though since his death he has introduced him in the *Confession of Father Berthier*, this is a fall of imagination which may be forgiven a wit. Besides, a Frenchman does not always despise those whom he ridicules, and no man was more a Frenchman than M. de Voltaire.

This talent of raillery he began to display very early, for while he was exceedingly young, a cook maid of his father's, who was mother to the journeyman cobbler that had been suborned by Rouf-

seau in his lawsuit against Saurin, being greatly afraid her son would be hanged, disturbed the whole family with her lamentations. ‘ Do not terrify yourself, good woman, said young Voltaire, there is nothing to fear : Rousseau, the son of a shoemaker, suborns a cobbler, who has, you say, a shoe-black for his accomplice : never fear, you will not be dirtied higher than the ancle.”*

Arouet was scarcely twelve years of age when an old invalid came to request the Regent of the college of Louis le Grand, to compose him a placet in verse for the Dauphin : the Regent referred him to his scholar, who produced the following verses :†

Offspring of the most puissant of monarchs,
His delight and our hope, who, tho’ not yet
A king, art sov’reign o’er thy people’s hearts ;
Permit my feeble, but ambitious hand,
An off’ring to present, tho’ this the due
And privilege of deities alone.
Her choicest gifts Nature thy birth bequeath’d,
And mark’d thee worthy of thy high descent.

* *Tout cela ne passera pas le cheville du pied.* A French Proverb.

† M. de Voltaire has given these verses in his *historical Commentary*, but with several alterations and corrections. We thought it might not be disagreeable to the reader to see the first essay of the young poet, rather than the copy corrected by the ripened judgment.

Each

Each god was anxious something to bestow ;
 Mars sent thee strength and valor, Pallas impress'd
 Even on youthful fire, the wisdom of age.
 Beauty was Apollo's gift ; but a god
 More mighty, whom in trouble I implore,
 Bestow'd somewhat on me when he bestow'd
 A liberal feeling heart upon my Prince.

This poetical trifle gained the old foldier twenty guineas.

While he was at college he wrote the following lines on the death of Nero, who killed himself :

Execrable accomplice of a mother's death,
 By my own hand to fall is what I merit.
 Cruelties alone have I yet committed,
 Thus let me at last do an act of justice.

Young Arouet had also some talents for Latin poetry, and has written verses in that language since he left college. The following, which expresses all the properties of fire in a few words, are among his best.

*Ignis ubique latet ; naturam amplectitur omnem,
 Cuncta parit, renovat, dividit, urit, alit*.*

* Fire lies hid every where, it penetrates all nature, it produces, renovates, divides, burns, and nourishes all things.

The Abbé de Chateauneuf, brother to the ambassador at the Hague, was godfather to young Arouet, and the confidential friend of his mother. He was very fond of his Godson, and endeavored all in his power to promote his interest. This Abbé was extremely intimate with Mademoiselle de l'Enclos, whose house was a kind of hotel de Rambouillet, the resort of wit and philosophy. Those mothers who wished to have their sons introduced to the world with advantage, sent them to that School; and she who would have led them into error in her youth, took a pleasure in her old age to form them for society.

Young Arouet, who was then but twelve years old, made verses much superior to what could have been expected from his age. Mademoiselle de l'Enclos wished to see him, and the Abbé de Chateauneuf, who managed her domestic affairs, introduced the young poet to that celebrated lady. Mademoiselle de l'Enclos was extremely pleased with him, and making her will a short time afterward, she bequeathed him a legacy of 2000 livres (83l. sterling) to buy books. She died very soon after. It has been said that Mademoiselle de l'Enclos preserved her beauty to the age of eighty. M. de Voltaire, who had seen her in the latter part of her life, says, in his *Defence of my Uncle*, that she was dried up like a mummy.

“ She

“ She was, adds he, a wrinkled skeleton, with a yellow or almost black skin covering her bones.” Much has been written on this celebrated courtesan, of which more is false than true. It is pretended that she never sacrificed to pleasure for interest, but was always determined by her affections; but as those affections so frequently changed their object, she was soon considered among the French as *Lais* or *Phryas* were among the Greeks. Some pious ladies once proposed to the Queen-Mother to shut her up in the convent of the Repentant Maidens, (*Filles-repenties*) but she replied, that would be highly improper, as she was neither the one nor the other. Though her Life has been written in form, it contains no remarkable events. Many lovers, a few friends, a sedentary life, and some agreeable entertainments, compose the whole history of this benefactress to M. de Voltaire.

Our poet, having conceived a violent passion for the belles lettres, refused to concur with the designs of his parents, who had intended him for the bar. Having been sent by his father to study the law, he was so disgusted at the manner in which jurisprudence was taught, that he conceived an unconquerable aversion to that science; he early renounced all his prospects of advancement in that profession, to devote himself entirely to the study of literature and mankind. But as it is

necessary to have some occupation, he attached himself to the Marquis de Chateauneuf, who, going to the Hague in 1713, took him with him in quality of page.

There was then in that town a woman whose adventures had rendered her famous. This was Madame du Noyer, known by five or six volumes of prolix and satirical letters. This lady was of a good family at Nîmes, and born a protestant. She had been obliged to embrace the catholic faith on her marriage with M. du Noyer. Ten years after she left her husband, and, taking her two Daughters with her, went to profess that religion, in Holland, the errors of which she had never abjured in her heart.

The youngest of her daughters, named *Pimpette*, possessed considerable vivacity and some charms. M. de Voltaire saw and loved her. He immediately conceived the project of stealing her from her mother and bringing her to Paris. This intrigue could not remain long concealed. It was necessary to take measures to hide it from the public, and above all from M. de Chateauneuf, to whom Madame du Noyer had made her complaint. M. de Voltaire was kept prisoner at the ambassador's hotel, where his mistress came to see him disguised in man's cloaths. It was, said he (in some verses made on the occasion) Venus disguised in
the

the person of Love. But Madame du Noyer and M. de Chateaufort saw not this adventure with the same eyes. The young man was sent back to Paris to his father, who would not see him, and obtained a *Lettre de Cachet* for his confinement. "I dare not shew myself, (says he in one of his letters) I have caused intercession to be made to my father; all I can obtain from him, is, that I must embark for the Colonies, and he will furnish me with bread and water, but nothing can prevail on him to change his resolution with regard to a will he has made, by which I am disinherited." To appease him a little he went to board with a lawyer, in order to qualify himself for that profession to which he had been first destined.

All these particulars are to be found in the letters of M. de Voltaire to Mademoiselle du Noyer, which her mother intercepted, and caused to be printed with her own. This proceeding, not very delicate, was the cause of much uneasiness, at the time, to M. de Voltaire, and he never admitted these love letters into any collection of his works. In this he was right, for they are certainly juvenile, or, as some would say, puerile productions. They nowhere exhibit the pathetic and moving language of Zara and Alzira. The style is simple, and even bordering on frigidity. The lover appears to have been inspired with
but

but a languid passion. As to his mistress, a fortunate marriage enabled her to lead a much happier life than she could have done in a foreign country, along with a mother of so singular a character and disagreeable a temper. The connexion between the two lovers terminated in a lasting esteem and friendship, of which M. de Voltaire gave many proofs to Mademoiselle du Noyer, after she became Madame Winterfeld. His enemies, in relating this adventure, have strangely misrepresented it. M. de la Beaumelle says, in his Notes on the Age of Louis XIV. that *Cavalier*, the chief of the insurgents among the Cevennes, was the rival of M. de Voltaire: "and, as might be expected, adds he, the hero bore away the prize from the poet, and a mild and agreeable set of features was preferred to a wild and malicious physiognomy."

All this is extremely false. Cavalier, being a Colonel in the English service, in 1708, went into the Low Countries, where he saw Mademoiselle du Noyer, then very young and handsome. He solicited her in marriage, but the negociation being broken off, he afterwards married in Ireland. M. de Voltaire was then at college, and did not go to Holland till 1713; nor did he become acquainted with Cavalier till 1726. And, indeed, if the anecdote related by M.
de

de la Beaumelle had been true, it was very improper to introduce it into a work of Voltaire's. It is like insulting a man in his own house. As to what is said of his person, it is not true that he was so disagreeable as he is described by M. de la Beaumelle. M. de Voltaire, when young, though not absolutely handsome, had a very engaging countenance. The loss of his teeth, the marks of the small-pox, the scurvy, and other disorders, arising from his great application, had afterwards considerably altered his features. But he always took care to conceal the decays of age, by the most careful cleanliness. Even in his youth he paid the greatest attention to his health. "Let me beg you (says he in a letter to the Marchioness de Mimeure) to send me the little plaister you promised me for the pimple which is come above my eye. Do not imagine this is foppery, my eyes begin to be of no further importance to me, but as they serve me to read with. Indeed, I no longer fear the eyes of any person."

In 1714, M. de Voltaire, disgusted with the law, again prosecuted his poetical studies. He composed an ode for the prize given by the French academy, but saw it adjudged to a writer much his inferior. This was the Abbé du Jarry; the public, however, never subscribed to the judgment of the academy.

The

The poem which obtained the prize was below mediocrity, and at the same time was rendered more contemptible by an absurdity which argued the most profound ignorance. In it was the following line :

“ E’en from the frozen to the burning poles.”

M. de la Motte, a man of an amiable character and considerable wit, had, by his credit and influence, obtained the prize for the Abbé du Jarry. When his decision was criticised, and the verse about the burning poles ridiculed, he answered, that it was a matter in natural philosophy, and belonged to the department of the academy of sciences, and not to that of the French academy; that, besides, he was not certain but there might be a burning pole, and, moreover, that the Abbé du Jarry was his friend.

The antagonist of M. de Voltaire, and likewise the judges, were much burlesqued at the time, especially by the disappointed candidate; and as such opportunities for wit are rarely afforded, he returned several times to the charge.

The following is an epigram he wrote on this occasion :

La Motte, presiding o’er the laurel,
For which your wits so often quarrel,
Worthy of *civic* crowns proclaims
The conquerors at *olympic* games :

The

The prize he held, but how bestow it?
 This blind Agonothet* mistook
 The blooming olive for an oak,
 And poor du Jarry for a poet.

Voltaire has not printed his ode among his works, though he has preserved several that are perhaps inferior to these his earliest productions. We shall only cite from it the following verses :

Th' express images of the gods they ought
 To honor, kings are ; but, tho' all pay homage,
 Too few are they who worthily adore :
 Their proud offerings, and pompous piety,
 Are often horrible in heav'n's sight.
 And, even on th' altar their pride prepares,
 We see th' avenging angel trace their sentence.
 Happy the king whose splendid crown his eye
 Not dazzles, nor his upright heart inflates.
 Who temples to th' omnipotent erects,
 Daring, amid his dignity, be humble,
 Seeking Justice, Hypocrisy confounding,
 And giving to Misfortune an asylum.
 To monarchs then a glorious example.

As to the rival of young Arouet, the Abbé du Jarry, he corrected his mistake of the frozen and the burning poles, by substituting the word

* Agonothetes the president and judge of games among the Greeks.

climates,

climates, which was more proper though less poetical. But how many times has propriety been sacrificed to harmony! This Abbé, though a very indifferent poet, has written some good verses, at least such as have a happiness of thought. Such are those where he says, he will retire from the world, before the world retires from him;

Entombed, as 'twere, I wait declining light,
And but anticipate eternal night.

The Abbé du Jarry had obtained the prize of the French academy twice before, once in 1679, and again in 1683. A number of persons of very moderate, or even inferior abilities, might be mentioned, who have attained to this distinction; with which Voltaire, and even Jean Baptiste Rousseau were never honored.

Our poet, early distinguished as a man of learning and wit, experienced all the obstacles which so frequently attend that character. The most serious of these was his confinement in the Bastille; the occasion of which was as follows:

Immediately after the death of Louis XIV. there appeared a little piece imitated from the *J'ai Vu* (I have seen) of the Abbé Regnier. In this the author reviewed various things he had seen in his life. This poem is as much neglected, at present, as it was then sought after; the constant
fate

fate of all works which have no merit but that of personal satire. This foolish production had no other. It was only remarkable for its gross and undeserved abuse. This however gave it prodigious popularity. The meanness of the style was pardoned for the malignity of the matter. It concluded thus: *I have seen these evils e'er my twentieth year.*

As M. de Voltaire was then about twenty years old, this was imagined by many a sufficient proof that he was the author of this wretched performance. They did not even do him the honor to believe he would be prudent enough to conceal himself. The real author of this miserable libel, at the same time, did his utmost to make it pass for M. de Voltaire's, that so he might himself be more effectually concealed. Voltaire's disgrace was intended and effected. The Regent caused him to be confined in the Bastille, in 1718; either because he attributed to him the *Jai Vu*, or imagined him to have been concerned in some *Philippics*; or else had heard of some of the young poet's bon-mots; which had for their subject the Prince's amours, and the changes in the administration.

It is reported that M. de Voltaire was in this melancholy mansion when his tragedy of Oedipus was acted, and that the Duke of Orleans, having

having seen this piece, was so delighted with it, that he ordered it's author to be set at liberty. M. de Voltaire, it is pretended, directly waited on the Prince to return him thanks, when the Duke bade him for the future be more circumspect, and he would take care of him. I am infinitely obliged to you, replied M. de Voltaire, but I must intreat your Highness not to trouble yourself any more to provide me with lodging and Board. This anecdote is false. However, M. de Voltaire having obtained his liberty, was forbidden to appear in Paris for some time, and exiled to Sully-sur-Loire. At length, tired of continuing in the country, he addressed the following verses to the Countess of Thoulouse, that she might intercede for him to be permitted to return to Paris.

For me, oh! deign to supplicate that Prince,
 Who, amiable and wise, with you so late
 Dangers and storms sustain'd, and look'd on death:
 Him with sweet sounds conjure t'avert the storm
 That me pursues, and thus persuasive speak:
 Oh thou whose cares our destinies have chang'd,
 Whose benefactions signalize thy pow'r,
 Who smil'st best pleas'd, when smiles humanity;
 Oh Prince, there yet remains a wretch in France,
 A vagrant son of verse, unfortunate,
 Whilom by thee condemn'd to fly those haunts
 Embellish'd by thy reign.—Yet think that oft

Apollo's

Apollo's fav'rites best a Prince's deeds
 Eternize, banish them, thou but driv'st forth
 So many heralds to thy own renown ;
 Augustus thus the tender Ovid drove
 To Scythian wilds, and, tho' an earthly god
 Augustus was, in this he was but man ;
 Blest tho' he liv'd, may'st thou great Prince now prove
 Than he more clement, and than he more happy.

As these ingenious verses are not found in any collection of the works of M. de Voltaire, there is no doubt but they will prove acceptable to the reader.

Soon after the disgrace of the Bastille, a person of experience in the affairs of the world predicted to M. de Voltaire, what he afterwards found very true. " Young man, said he, continue to write tragedies, and renounce every serious occupation ; doubt not, however, but you will be persecuted during your whole life, since you are so far abandoned by God, as, in a fit of youthful levity, to become a poet."

This connoisseur in poetry and men, quoted a hundred examples of the misfortunes which had followed a cultivation of literature and the fine arts. He urged the best reasons possible to dissuade him from his pursuits. But what was the poet's reply ? He made verses to prove he would make no more, and soon perceived how vain was the attempt to vanquish a ruling passion.

M. de Voltaire had contracted a very intimate friendship with the President de Maisons, and went frequently to his country seat to cultivate his acquaintance, and the Belles Lettres. There, in the autumn of 1723, he was attacked by the small-pox. In a letter, at present before us, he thus gives the History of his disorder :

“ The President de Maisons and myself were
 “ taken ill the 4th of November last, but hap-
 “ pily all the danger fell upon me. We were
 “ let blood the same day; he soon recovered;
 “ but I had the small-pox. This disorder ap-
 “ peared, after a fever of two days, in a slight
 “ eruption, when I was a second time bled by
 “ my own authority, and in defiance of vulgar
 “ prejudice. M. de Maisons had the goodness
 “ to send to me the next day M. de Gervasi,
 “ physician to the Cardinal de Rohan, who came
 “ with some reluctance. He was fearful he should
 “ be unsuccessful in attempting the cure of the
 “ small-pox, in so weak and delicate a constitu-
 “ tion, after the second day of the eruption,
 “ when no preparative had been made use of,
 “ except two slight bleedings, without any ca-
 “ thartic.

“ Nevertheless he came, and found me in a
 “ dangerous fever. He had at first a very bad
 “ opinion of my disorder, my servants perceived
 “ it,

“ it, and suffered me not to remain in ignorance.
 “ I was informed at the same time, that the priest
 “ of Maisons, who was much concerned at my
 “ illness, and not afraid of the small-pox, had
 “ desired to know whether he could see me,
 “ without disturbing me. I ordered him to be
 “ admitted into my chamber, and immediately
 “ confessed, and made my will, which, as you
 “ will suppose, was of no great length.

“ After this, I expected death with resigna-
 “ tion, though not without regretting that I had
 “ not yet put the finishing hand to my Poem,
 “ and Mariamne; nor without being a little vexed
 “ at quitting my friends so soon. However,
 “ M. de Gervasi never left me a moment, and
 “ remarked with attention every effort of nature,
 “ never giving me any thing to take without
 “ assigning his reason, and at once explaining to
 “ me my danger, and pointing out the proper
 “ remedies. His reasoning convinced, at the same
 “ time that it inspired confidence.

“ Nothing is indeed of so much importance
 “ as that a patient should have confidence in
 “ his physician, since the hope of being cured
 “ is frequently half the cure. He was obliged
 “ to give me an emetic eight several times,
 “ and, instead of cordials, which are commonly
 “ given in this disorder, he made me drink two

“ hundred pints of Lemonade. This seemingly
 “ extraordinary treatment was the only one which
 “ could save my life, any other would infalli-
 “ bly have proved my destruction. I am well
 “ persuaded the greatest part of those who have
 “ perished by this dreadful distemper would
 “ have been still alive, if they had been treated
 “ in the same manner.

“ What gave me the greatest consolation, du-
 “ ring my illness, was the concern you expressed,
 “ the solicitude of all my friends, and the inex-
 “ preffible kindness I experienced from Madame
 “ and M. de Maisons. I besides enjoyed the
 “ satisfaction of having with me one of those
 “ virtuous few who alone know what friendship
 “ is, while the rest of the world are merely ac-
 “ quainted with its name. The person I mean
 “ is M. Tiriot, who, from the time he first heard
 “ of my illness, never quitted me. By the 15th
 “ I was quite out of danger, and wrote verses on
 “ the 16th, notwithstanding the extreme weak-
 “ ness I still experienced, from the disorder, and
 “ the remedies I had taken.

“ I waited with impatience to have it in my
 “ power to leave Maisons, and put an end to
 “ the trouble I had there occasioned. The greater
 “ kindness I experienced, the more anxious was
 “ I not to abuse so much goodness, and on the

“ 1st

“ 1st of December found myself sufficiently re-
 “ covered to set out for Paris.

“ My departure was followed by a dreadful
 “ accident: Scarcely was I gotten two hundred
 “ paces from the house of M. de Maisons, when
 “ a fire broke out in the apartment I had just
 “ quitted, which consumed several of the ad-
 “ joining rooms, and others underneath, with all
 “ their valuable furniture. The loss amounted
 “ to near a hundred thousand livres (above four
 “ thousand Pounds) and without the assistance
 “ of some engines, which were sent for from
 “ Paris, one of the finest edifices in France
 “ would have been entirely destroyed. The
 “ news of this strange accident was concealed
 “ from me on my arrival, but I was informed
 “ of it in the morning. You cannot imagine
 “ my distress. You know with what kindness
 “ I was entertained by M. de Maisons, who
 “ treated me with a brotherly affection, and the
 “ reward of all his goodness was the burning a
 “ part of his house.

“ I could not conceive how my chamber could
 “ so suddenly take fire, as I had only left in it
 “ a few embers nearly extinguished. I after-
 “ wards found that the fire had been caused by
 “ a beam which ran exactly under the hearth.
 “ This impropriety is avoided in the modern

“ buildings, as the frequent accidents that have
 “ happened, from this dangerous method of
 “ building, have produced a law by which it is
 “ forbidden. The beam I have mentioned took
 “ fire by degrees from the heat of the hearth,
 “ which was directly over it, though fortunately
 “ the fire, which had been smouldering there
 “ for two days before, did not break out till after
 “ my departure.

“ Though not actively, I was passively the
 “ unhappy cause of this accident, and I felt as
 “ much as if it had happened by my neglect. I
 “ was directly seized again by the fever, and can
 “ assure you, that, at that moment, I regretted
 “ M. de Gervasi had preserved my life.

“ Madame and M. de Maisons received the
 “ news with much less concern than I. Their
 “ generosity was as great as their loss, or my
 “ grief. M. de Maisons wrote to me, in a man-
 “ ner which shewed his goodness and delicacy
 “ were every way equal to his understanding.
 “ He indeed took so much pains to console me,
 “ that it seemed as if he had been the occasion
 “ of burning my house ; but this greatness of
 “ mind only served to increase my sorrow, and
 “ as long as I live my concern for the accident
 “ will equal my admiration of his virtues.”

.The

The memory of the President de Maisons was always dear to M. de Voltaire. The place he has given him in his Temple of Taste proves him at once capable of feeling and celebrating friendship.

“ Among these amiable persons” (says he)
 “ I met the President de Maisons, a man who
 “ never spoke without a meaning, of a Character
 “ both amiable and solid, who loved and pro-
 “ tected the arts.”

Transporting pleasures! moments charg'd with joy!
 Dear friend, said I, sprinkling with tears his much lov'd
 shade,

Thee have I lost! Thee, hated Death, to pray'rs
 And pity deaf, tho' blooming were thy years,
 Tore from my trembling arms! Ah! surely, since
 This cruel separation was decreed,
 'Twas thine by right to live, and mine to die.
 For from the day I first beheld the light,
 Heav'n gave me Grief for my inheritance;
 Whilst thy career was brilliant, strew'd with flow'rs;
 In the bosom of pleasures, arts, and honors,
 Peace was thy culture, Wisdom was thy child.
 Virtue with thee was not th' effect of weakness;
 Nor didst thou, with the bandage of example,
 Or weak opinion, ever blind-fold Reason.
 For error man is born, nor is the clay
 Beneath the potter's moulding hand more pliant,
 Than is the soul to erring prejudices apt;
 Those silly rplers of a silly world.

But Nature gave thee strength to brave their laws,
 Taught thee to taste the sweets of gentle friendship;
 And, to a manly understanding, added
 The tenderest, most just, and best of hearts.

M. de Voltaire likewise paid his tribute of gratitude to his physician. He has addressed to him an epistle, which contains a list of those illustrious persons who were then friends to the author.

By thee and by thy art I still enjoy,
 Amidst my pangs, the pleasures and the sweets
 Of that society illustrious friendship yields;
 For thus my fates, happy in this, decreed.

Thee, Maisons, I again behold, whose hand,
 Benevolent, the bed of sickness soften'd,
 Thee whose wisdom experience precedes,
 Whose prudence, in the age of folly, we admire.

What pleasures, virtuous Sulli, shalt thou feel,
 When thou behold'st me rising from the tomb!
 While I, in secret, hope thy gen'rous heart
 It's suffrage shall accord to my last labor,
 And that my Mariamne's woes may haply
 Call forth the pleasing tear of sweet compassion.

Gardens superb, ye whose refreshing shades
 Villars owns and honors, under your foliage,
 Crown'd with glory, give me again the hero,
 Who, on the wings of vict'ry, sent us peace.

There Richelieu also, soon as he appears,
 With grace, hilarity, and wit bewitching,
 Mine and all hearts shall charm and fascinate,

And

And thou, beloved Bolingbroke, Apollo's
 Fav'rite ; thou, who to Cicero's eloquence
 Dost add Petronian elegance, Mæcænian wit,
 For thee, once more, I breathe ; again to thee
 Shall listen, and again with thee converse, &c.

M. de Voltaire was one of the first men of letters who lived in familiarity with the great. He, like them, maintained secretaries, valets-de-chambre, and all those domestics proper to give him consequence in the eyes of the little and of the great vulgar. Haughty among nobles, he never suffered a slight or insult to pass unnoticed. The answer he made to the Chevalier de R—, is well remembered. The Chevalier was pleased to make merry with the name of Voltaire, which he had assumed. The difference, retorted the Poet, between you and me, is, that I am the first of my name, and you are the last of yours. The Chevalier de R—, piqued at the vivacity of this repartee, treated M. de Voltaire, when he met him at the Duc de Sully's, with some rudeness, and that nobleman, not taking the Poet's part with sufficient warmth, M. de Voltaire took a remarkable revenge : he immediately called in all the copies of the *Henriade*, which was then only known under the title of the *League*, a Poem in six Cantos, and published a new edition, in its present form, in which he substituted the name of
 Mornay

Mornay instead of that of the Duc de Sulli, which is no longer to be found in the poem.

It was about that time that M. Arouet took the name by which he has been since so celebrated, During a journey which he made into Italy, says Chevrier, he fell sick at Volterra, a town in Tuscany, where he was taken care of with so much respect, that he took the name out of gratitude, and the inhabitants of Volterra still esteem this circumstance an honor. This anecdote has not the least foundation. Voltaire never was in Italy. He derived his new name from an estate which belonged to his mother. "I have been so unfortunate with the other, (says he in a letter about that time) that I intend to see if I shall have more success with this." It is very singular, that he has often been upbraided with changing his name, though such a change is always permitted to any person, equally rich; and even the most inconsiderable Gascon may lengthen his by two or three syllables, or metamorphose it at pleasure, without any remarks being made.

The confinement of M. de Voltaire in the Bastille was not prejudicial to his talents. He there composed several works, part of which he retained in his memory, and wrote the rest on the walls with a coal, or on the lead of the windows with the point of a pin. The *Henriade*, the idea of which

which had been suggested to him by M. de Caumartin, an old man full of enthusiasm for Henry IV, was written during this year's imprisonment. It at first consisted of only six cantos, of which none remain except the second, that contains the massacre of St. Bartholomew. The manner in which his health had suffered during his confinement, and the continual infirmities under which he afterwards labored, would not permit him to apply himself to perfecting his *Henriade* but feebly and at long intervals.

In 1723 this poem was published under the title of the *League*. This first edition was ill digested, mutilated, and imperfect. One canto was wanting, and the rest disposed in an improper order. It was also entitled a *poeme*, a kind of work which had never succeeded in the French language, and seemed to promise nothing but an effusion of dulness. Yet so dear was the memory of Henry IV to the French, that this poem was read with indulgence, and even passed through more than one edition.

In 1726, being in England, he met with universal protection and encouragement, which he could not have hoped for elsewhere. The publication of a French work, written with freedom, was eagerly promoted. King George I, and especially the Princess of Wales, afterwards Queen, obtained

obtained for him a numerous subscription. This was the beginning of his good fortune, which from that time continually increased.

This generosity greatly added to the good opinion which Voltaire entertained of the English nation, and he never failed to extol that people in all his writings. He was however far from meeting with the same treatment from his own countrymen; but the Cardinal de Tencin, Ambassador from France to Rome, who possessed as much taste for literature as abilities for business, having read some passages of this work to the Pope, his Holiness forbade his Nuncio to be concerned in the prosecution of the author.

The Queen of England, to whom the *Henriade* was at first dedicated, received the dedication favorably; and the King sent the author a present of two thousand crowns, and patronized him and his work: but both were persecuted at Paris. The envy of his brother authors is scarcely to be credited. A thousand petulant criticisms appeared against it. The *Henriade* was ridiculed at the theatre, called *La Comedie Italienne*, and also at that of the Fair: But all this cabal and malevolence could not prevent the success of the Poem. It ran through more than twenty editions, and several of its cantos were translated into various languages.

M. Nenci,

M. Nenci, of the Academy at Rome, in particular, distinguished himself by translating the first canto into Italian verse. The copiousness of his language, the liberty of blank verse, together with the genius and taste he possessed in so eminent a degree, enabled him to translate this canto with equal elegance and fidelity. The French language, more confined, and incapable of admitting verse without rhyme, has never yet produced a translation in verse, at once faithful and poetical, of a poem from any language whatever. Every thing of that kind is at best but an imitation ; on which account the French generally translate into prose. But it may be said, that poetry translated into prose is not really translated. The principal idea may be exact, but the accessory must be wanting. Neither the cadence, the harmony, nor the boldness of the expression can be retained. A poetical prose is but prose still, and if it departs much from it becomes ridiculous : whence we may conclude, a French translation, either in verse or prose, of Homer, Virgil, Horace, Ovid, &c. can never give a just idea of those authors, because there is as much difference between a French translation of any of the exquisite works of antiquity and the works themselves, as between two modern productions, one of which attains only to mediocrity, while the other is admirably beautiful.

In

In 1736, the King of Prussia, then Prince Royal, caused an engraved edition of the *Henriade*, with vignettes at the head of each page, to be begun in London. He even deigned to honor this undertaking with a preface written by himself, and this uncommon honor was the most valuable recompence the author could receive for all he had suffered from the critics of his own country.

“ The Poem of the *Henriade*, in fact, was but
 “ an unfinished work, which, though it contained
 “ many beautiful verses, was full of inequalities.
 “ M. de Voltaire was superior to the weakness of
 “ imagining himself perfect. He corrected its
 “ improprieties, and converted its defects into
 “ beauties. This great work will now continue a
 “ striking proof, that docility and continual ap-
 “ plication can alone conduct us to immortality.

“ The critics of the *Henriade* seem at first to
 “ have refused it the name of an epic poem ; but
 “ what other name can suit a work which exhi-
 “ bits a unity of action, place, time, and in-
 “ terest, more than any other work of the same
 “ kind ? I appeal to every man of taste in Eu-
 “ rope, whether from the first line to the last of
 “ the poem, the interest does not turn on Henry
 “ the Great.

“ The

“ The unity of place is observed, because Paris is always supposed besieged, and because the commencement of the siege, and the entrance of the King into the city, form the subject of the work.

“ The unity of time is yet more rigorously preserved, since the time of the whole action is that of a single summer.

“ The unity of interest is evident, since our whole attention is directed to Henry the Great.

“ It cannot therefore be doubted, but all the rules are here inviolably observed.

“ I shall not listen to the objections made to M. de Voltaire’s not having employed heaven, earth, and hell to carry on his action. It certainly could not be expected that Jupiter and Venus should concern themselves with the affairs of Henry IV, and we ought undoubtedly to applaud the author for not having introduced magicians, like Tasso, or angels canonading each other, like Milton. There seems to me a singular dexterity to be able to employ fictions which are neither puerile nor extravagant in this enlightened and philosophical Age, when fictions, purely poetical, would be regarded as proofs of a false taste.

“ But the *Henriade* will especially delight persons of sense, because in it the author has

“ written

“ written no less rationally than poetically. He
 “ has described our manners and customs, and
 “ it must be confessed that no epic poet, ex-
 “ cept Homer, has been able to draw portraits
 “ which preserve a resemblance. We find in
 “ the *Henriade*, our manner of fighting, our
 “ fortifications, our sieges, our laws, our cus-
 “ toms, and those of our neighbours, and what
 “ is more than all, characteristic portraits of all
 “ the principal persons in the time of Henry IV.
 “ The reader will necessarily be charmed to find
 “ so much truth in a species of composition
 “ where commonly nothing is to be found but
 “ fiction.

“ Some have affected to call *Telemachus*
 “ an epic poem, apparently with a view to de-
 “ prive the *Henriade* of the glory of being the
 “ only French work of that species : but I am
 “ well persuaded, M. de Fenelon would not
 “ have presumed to have given so grand a title
 “ to his production. Those who speak so impro-
 “ perly, are such as wish for the glory of being
 “ accounted poets, without the labor of writ-
 “ ing poetry. They boldly assert, a long com-
 “ position in verse can never succeed, because
 “ they know themselves incapable of producing
 “ such a one ; and I will venture to affirm, that
 “ nothing but the appearance of the *Henriade*
 could

“ could have convinced the French nation
 “ it was possible for an epic poem to be written
 “ in their language.

“ I am ready to allow, it was the opinion of
 “ M. de Fenelon, that the French could never
 “ raise themselves to the sublimity necessary for
 “ the epopœa ; he was unacquainted with the
 “ powers of our poetry. He was himself but a
 “ very indifferent poet, as is manifest from the
 “ few verses of his which have been published.
 “ He imagined, the measure of the ode was
 “ more pleasing to the ear than our heroic verse,
 “ and that this measure alone can be supported
 “ without becoming tiresome ; but if he had con-
 “ sidered that our tragedies are written in Alex-
 “ andrine verse of twelve syllables, he would
 “ never have imagined epic poems must be com-
 “ posed in stanzas.”

The account here given of the *Henriade* has occasioned the following observations by M. de M.

Note and letter furnished by M. de M.

THE apology for the *Henriade*, as it is above quoted, is taken from a Letter of M. de la Bruère, that is to say, of M. de Voltaire, who wrote it under the Name of La Bruère, his friend, against the Journalists of Trevoux. There

D

are

are certainly many beautiful passages in the *Henriade*, but what will infallibly prevent its being ranked with the *Eneid*, or the *Jerusalem* of *Tasso*, is, that it contains but little invention, that the perpetual employment of *Discord*, as a messenger, renders it extremely frigid ; and that the personification of the passions can produce nothing but languor in a long poem, unless they appear under the name of some hero or divinity who may fix the attention of the reader. The author has likewise been blamed for his enormous profusion of antitheses ; his numerous prosaic verses by the side of others which are very brilliant ; too great a sameness in his characters, &c. and for having stifled pathos with description.

The criticism of the Journalists of *Trevoux* laid the first foundation of *Voltaire's* enmity to the *Jesuits*, though while they continued powerful he made his attacks in secret. Of this kind was the following piece against *Father Castel*, one of the Journalists. It was circulated in manuscript at the time, and attributed to different authors, but is certainly by *Voltaire*.

LETTER

LETTER to M. RAMEAU,

Concerning Father CASTEL and his ocular HARSICHORD, by M. de VOLTAIRE.

I CONGRATULATE you, M. Rameau, on having made new discoveries in your art. After having exhibited so many new beauties in it, you have acquired the approbation of the Academy of Sciences, as well as the applauses of the pit at the Opera House: but, above all, you may boast an honor which I think no one ever could before. Other authors are commented on a thousand years after their death, by some wretched and tiresome pedant, but your works have had a commentator even during your life, and one widely different from such as I have just mentioned.

This must certainly prove your merit, but the Reverend Father Castel, fearing you should be too vain of so much glory, has, like a good christian, been desirous to procure you a salutary humiliation. So much has he your salvation at heart, that, without greatly considering the state of the question, he has only thought of humbling you; rather wishing your sanctification than instruction.

"*Without reason*," was the witty reply of Father Canaye; and this expression "*without reason*," has appeared to him so striking, he has made it

the rule of all his actions, and all his compositions ; nay so exceedingly potent is he in this great mode of argument, I am astonished how you have escaped its force.

You may dispute against us, who are in the contemptible habit of only acknowledging self-evident principles, and slowly proceeding from consequence to consequence, but how can you combat against the Reverend Father Castel ? This indeed is to battle with Bellerophon. Reflect on your rash enterprize ; you have confined yourself to the calculation of sounds, and to furnish excellent music for our ears ; but at present you are to engage a man who composes music for the eyes. He paints minuets and beautiful sarabands. All the deaf in Paris are invited by him to a concert which he has been preparing for them these twelve years, and there is not a dyer who does not promise himself inexpressible pleasure from the Opera of Colours, which the Reverend Philosopher intends to represent by his ocular harpsichord. Even the blind are invited.* He esteems them very good judges of colours, and he ought so to do, for they judge of them nearly in the same manner as he

* Father Castel, in his letters to the President de Montequieu, says, that the blind themselves may judge of his harpsichord.

does

does of your music. He has already introduced weak mortals to these sublime discoveries. He prepares us by degrees to understand this admirable art. With what goodness, with what condescension towards the human race has he deigned to demonstrate, in his letters, which are the ornament of the *Journal de Trevoux*, to demonstrate, I say, by lemmas, theorems and scholiums--1st, That all men love pleasure. 2d, That painting is a pleasure. 3d, That yellow is different from red : and a hundred other knotty questions of the same nature !

You are not to imagine, that, in order to raise himself to the discovery of these sublime truths, he has neglected our ordinary music ; on the contrary, he wishes every one to learn it with facility, and for that purpose has given, at the end of his *Universal Mathematics*, a scheme of all the parts of music, divided into one hundred and thirty-four treatises, for the benefit of the memory ; a division certainly suitable to so rare a work, in which he has filled three hundred and sixty pages before he comes to the definition of an angle. That you may learn to reverence your master, you, as well as the negligent public, are to be informed, he has completed a new system of Natural Philosophy ; which, like himself, is without a parallel. This system is contained in two formidable volumes. A bold man of my acquaintance, who has

dared to look into these terrible mysteries, has shewn me what may appear incredible. We are informed (book 5. chap. 3, 4, 5.) that men are the maintainers of all the motion in the universe, and the entire mechanism of nature; and that if there were no men, the whole machine would be deranged. He shewed me little vortices, and wheels that run one into another, which have a charming effect, and explain the nature of the great springs of the world. How prodigious was my admiration when I read (part 2d. page 309.) this beautiful aphorism—"God has created nature, and nature has created the world."

He never thinks like the vulgar. We had believed, till now, on the evidence of our deceitful senses, fire always endeavors to ascend; but he employs three chapters to prove its tendency is always downwards. He generously combats one of the finest demonstrations of Newton*. He allows, indeed, there is some truth in this demonstration, but, like the Irishman, celebrated in the schools, he says, *Hoc fateor; verum contra sic argumentor*. This I confess; but, on the contrary, thus I argue. It is true his rea-

* The proposition is that in which Sir Isaac demonstrates, by fluxions, that every body, moving in a curve, if it pass through equal spaces, tends towards a center, and *vice versa*.

soning

soning against Newton has been proved to be a mere sophism; but, as M. de Fontenelle says, "Men deceive themselves, but *great* men confess they deceive themselves." You see clearly the Reverend Father wants only a trifling confession to become a great man. The sagacity of his genius extends to every thing, without ever being out of his sphere. Speaking of madness, (book 5. chap. 7.) he says, "*The organs of the brain in a madman are a curve line, and the geometrical expression of an equation.*" What depth of understanding! Is it not as if we saw a rich man calculating his wealth? In short, is it not easy to perceive, from his ideas and his style, how profoundly he is skilled in all these matters? Do you know that, in his *Universal Mathematics*, he says, "That which we call the largest angle is really the smallest, and the more acute an angle is the greater it is?" That is to say, he pretends the thing contained is larger than the thing containing. This, like many other of his discoveries, is indeed most marvellous.

Do you know likewise, when he speaks of the vanishing of infinitely small quantities by multiplication, he wittily adds, *that a person often rises only to fall on his face.*

You certainly will never be able to resist both his geometry and his wit. This new Father

Garasse, who attacks every thing good, could not be expected to spare you. He is still vain of his opposition to your Newtons, your Leibnitzes, your Reaumurs, and your Maupertuis. He is the Don Quixote of mathematicians; with this difference, that Don Quixote always imagined he fought with giants, while the Reverend Father thinks he is himself a giant.

Let us not disturb the good opinion he entertains of his abilities; let us leave in peace the manes of his works, buried in the *Journal de Trevoux*; which, thanks to his care, so well maintains the character given it by Boileau; and certainly for some years back, modern memoirs cannot make us regret the old. Perhaps he may write another letter to encourage the universe to be of his opinion concerning your music; for he has already published several pamphlets to encourage the universe, and to enlighten the universe. Imitate the universe, Sir, and return him no answer.

Account of the DISPUTES of ROUSSEAU the Poet, with M. DE VOLTAIRE.

MEN of letters are still divided in their opinions concerning this quarrel. The origin of it, or who was most in fault, are still unknown. Rousseau lays the whole blame on M. de Voltaire, who has defended himself with considerable wit.

We

We shall lay before the reader one of ~~his~~ letters, which has never yet appeared, or at least has appeared with several alterations : but we will first give an account in a few words of this celebrated contest.

The disagreement between these two poets began at Bruffels. Rousseau first met with M. de Voltaire at the college of Louis'le Grand, and admired his extraordinary genius for poetry. Young Arouet took care to cultivate an acquaintance which promised to be so advantageous. He extolled him in all his works, and Rousseau, flattered by this respect, described him as a poet who should one day become the glory of the age in which he lived. The author of the *Henriade* never failed to consult him on all his writings, and their friendship increased every day.

Rousseau filled all his letters with his praises—
 “ You would do me a pleasure (says he to one of his friends) if you would send me the verses of M. Arouet. He is a young man of very great abilities, and will make a good use of them if he follows the advice I am always ready to give him when asked.” In a letter, written in 1719, he says, “ M. Arouet has sent his *Oedipus* with a very handsome letter. I am not surpris'd at the great success of this piece, which it certainly deserves. It has nearly attained all the perfection

tion the subject would admit." And, in another letter, written in 1722, are these remarkable words, " Monsieur de Voltaire has passed eleven days at Brussels. He has been so kind as to leave his poem with me for five or six days. It certainly does him great honor. Our nation wanted a work of that kind. The conduct of it is admirable, and the poetry beautiful; except in two or three places, concerning which he agrees with me in opinion. In short, it contains nothing which can be justly criticised."

The two poets, unfortunately meeting again at Brussels, conceived the most irreconcilable hatred to each other; the origin of which, according to Rousseau and his partisans, was Voltaire's reading to him his Epistle to Julia, at present to Urania. This work he heard with an indignation which he could not help manifesting to the author; who, irritated by his reproaches, replied in an abusive manner.

This is Rousseau's story; but his adversaries, and the friends of the poet whom he decried, suspected him of secret enmity. The success of *Mariamne* was, according to them, the real cause of this enmity. Rousseau had written a *Mariamne*, after the old piece of *Tristan*, which was hissed, while that of his rival was acted forty times. Whatever was the reason, it is much to be lamented

mented (to use the words of the author of the *Nouveau Dictionnaire Historique*) that two men, who did honor to France and to poetry, should fill their immortal works with invectives and sarcasms, which, descending to posterity, must perpetuate their hatred and their shame. What is most singular, is, that they labored to inspire the public with a contempt for each other, which they did not feel themselves, and to destroy an esteem which they were forced to preserve, in spite of their endeavors to the contrary. We shall now lay before the reader the letter of M. de Rousseau, and afterwards that of M. de Voltaire, much less known, though infinitely better written, and a clear proof that he was as much superior to his antagonist in prose, as M. de Rousseau was to him in his odes.

LETTER of M. de ROUSSEAU to M,**
with some Notes, which have never before appeared.

" I HAVE just received, Sir, the last libel which Voltaire has published against me; for he has not been deterred by the affronts he met with on account of the former. This is in the same style. It consists of two parts, one of which is a preface in prose, under the name of his

his editor : the other is that epistle to the Marchioness du Chatelet, with which all the papers of Paris and Holland have for some months past threatened me. Both these master-pieces of wit were intended to appear in the front of a new dramatic piece, which he has just published at Paris ; but, the censors having rejected them with the indignation they deserved, fearing he should lose the fruit of his commendable labors, he sent them to be printed, clandestinely, by his booksellers at Amsterdam ; with orders to publish them under pain of incurring his displeasure, and being for ever deprived of the honor of printing his works, I am persuaded you will not expect from me an answer in the same style.

M. de Voltaire has been too long accustomed to entertain the public in this manner for me to dispute it with him, or desire to partake in so disgraceful a privilege. The gross abuse with which he loads me, and the absurdities with which it is accompanied, prove nothing but his hatred ; but this does not afflict me much, since his enmity is far more honorable than his esteem. But as you wish to be informed of the origin of his hatred, I shall enable you to judge for yourself by a concise relation of all that has passed between me and him since our first intimacy.

Some

Some ladies of my acquaintance had taken me to see a tragedy performed by the Jesuits, in August, 1710. After the representation, when the prizes were distributed, I took notice that the same scholar was twice called, and asked Father Tarteron, who did the honors of the apartment in which we were? Who that young man was, so much distinguished among his companions? He replied, he was a youth who had a surprising genius for poetry, and proposed to introduce him to me, to which I consented. He went to find him, and returned a moment after with a young scholar who seemed to be about sixteen or seventeen years of age, of an ill countenance, but a lively and penetrating eye, and who came and embraced me with a very good grace.

I heard no more of him from that time, till, about two years afterwards, being at Soleure, I received from him a complimentary letter, together with an ode he had composed for the prize of the academy, concerning which he requested my opinion; I gave it him with all the sincerity due to the confidence of a young person whom we esteem. I learned, however, that the academy rejected this ode, and that, the year after, a second, which he had written by way of revenge, had met with the same fate. He continued however to write to me from time to time,
and

and always in the most extravagant terms*, calling me his master, and his model, and sending me several little pieces, written after his manner, in which his severe and satirical genius began to display itself, but in reality containing but little of that wit and those simple graces which so powerfully charm, and which alone bring over the reader to the interest of the writer; an art which anger and malice cannot teach, and which M. de Voltaire has, it is very evident, never possessed.

I have still by me several of his letters; and the Baron de Breteuil, who patronized him, and who regularly maintained a correspondence with me till his death, frequently wrote to me concerning him, and informed me sometimes of his success, and sometimes of his miscarriage and disgrace.

By the letters of this nobleman, which I still preserve, and which are for the most part written in his own hand, I became acquainted with some of the first misfortunes of this irritable poet; any one of which were sufficient to produce his amendment, had that been possible. The insult which he drew on himself from the hand of old Poison, behind the scenes at the theatre; the

* It cannot be denied that M. de Voltaire began his acquaintance with Rousseau, Maupertuis, and others, by adulation, though it ended by abuse.

mark which an officer, whom he had slandered, left him on the Pont de Sève ; his imprisonment in the Bastille for satirical and scandalous verses ; his ridiculous and frantic behaviour in the pit at the theatre while his *Artemira* was hissed ; and an infinity of other such instances might easily be found in the letters I received from M. de Breteuil, if I would take the pains to look for them. Indeed I should not mention this, did not such a correspondence, maintained without interruption during twenty years with one of the most illustrious friends I ever possessed, sufficiently prove the false and audacious malevolence of the man who can pretend I was ungrateful to my benefactor, and *stung the bosom* (to use his expression) *in which I was cherished*. His friendship and my gratitude are attested by all my writings ; one of my best performances is an epistle addressed to that very nobleman. Permit me, Sir, to digress for a moment, and ask you, whether it be not easy, from this atrocious calumny, to judge of all the accusations he has brought against me ? They may be reduced, setting aside the abuse, to which I pretend not to answer, to a list of persons whom, as he pretends in his preface, I have insulted. But where can these names be found in any of my writings ? If the characters I have drawn resemble some persons he has named, why should

should he inform the public of this perhaps imaginary resemblance? Can he penetrate my intentions? Or will he have the effrontery to say, I have made him my confidant? Does he imagine he will be much thanked by those persons whom he pretends to recognize in some characters which are ridiculed in my works?

Should I describe a conceited fool, pillaging all the authors he met with, and then decrying, in hopes to prevent others from reading them, and so discovering his thefts; should I exhibit the same man endeavoring to conceal the most profound ignorance under the pride of pedantry, and manifesting, even in his gait and gestures, all the absurdities of a madman, displaying a rashness which, beginning in insolence, always terminates in meanness; in short, one given up to the utmost extravagance of sentiments and conduct; sometimes cloathing religion in the garb of impiety, and at others investing impiety in the robes of religion; would M. de Voltaire think himself obliged to any one who should say, this must certainly have been intended for your portrait? Yet this is what he has done by those persons whom he has named, and whom he alone has insulted.

He alone therefore is the satirist, while I have only done what all poets, orators, and preachers,
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or whoever have undertaken to correct or ridicule the vices of mankind have done before: Boileau, our master in every thing, used no such ceremony. He scrupled not to attack by name the Voltaires,* and other absurd characters of his time.

Warring Boileau's genius, I consider it as becoming me to use more reserve. I have therefore named no one in my writings. I have too good an opinion of those who do not suppose themselves levelled at, to imagine they will regard the malicious applications of such a man as Voltaire; and as to those who may suspect they were the persons meant, I shall address them in the words of the Fabulist :

*Suspicione si quis errabit sua,
Et trahet ad se quod erit commune omnium,
Stultè nudabit animi conscientiam.†*

This contemptible method, which he has employed to procure me enemies, is only a wretched repetition of the rascally artifices by which I have

* What Rousseau says here of the talents of M. de Voltaire, is too evidently the effect of passion; especially when he will not allow there is merit in his satire.

† Should any one suspiciously apply to himself what was not meant to be personal, he would only thereby foolishly betray a consciousness of his own guilt.

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before time been slandered. He has not the gift of invention, but since luckily his character is better known than that of those whom he has copied, it is to be hoped he will not have the same success. I do not allude here to the infamous verses which have been attributed to me so unjustly, and in which the blackest malice cannot pretend to discover either my style or manner of thinking; for if any should still have the effrontery to accuse me of being the author of these, they will meet with no one simple enough to believe them. This discussion has lead me too far from my subject, I shall therefore again resume my narration.

I was still at Vienna when he sent me his tragedy of Oedipus. Notwithstanding the numerous faults of this piece, as I am always ready to excuse the imperfections of young writers, in hopes that time and study may mature their judgment, I returned him an answer with which a poet of much greater abilities ought to have been satisfied. I only advised him, for the future, to speak with more respect of Sophocles and other great men, whom it was his custom to abuse in his prefaces. He sent me, some time after, a copy of the beginning of his poem, entitled, The League. Having learned from my answer that Prince Eugene had done me the honor to appoint me to accompany him, on his intended journey into the

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Low Countries, he wrote me word that, as soon as he knew I was arrived, he would do himself the pleasure of paying me a visit.

As this intended expedition of the Prince was laid aside, for reasons which were then known to every body, I, in the year following, performed my proposed journey alone, and Voltaire took care not to fail to be at Brussels two months after in the suite of Madame de Rupelmonde,* whom some family concerns obliged to go to Holland.

I here cannot avoid relating in what manner I was informed of his arrival.

* M. de Voltaire, on his way to Brussels, passed through Cambray. At an entertainment, at which he was present with Madame de Rupelmonde, the company expressed a desire to see his Oedipus played in the presence of its author. M. de Voltaire was desired to write to the Governor to request permission that that piece might be represented. He immediately left the table and produced the following *placet* :

The congress, after short debate,
Your Lordship hereby supplicate,
To-morrow's anxious cares t' enchant,
A tragedy you'd please to grant ;
And that their hopes be not postpon'd,
They beg i' th' name of Rupelmonde.
A name so potent, who can fear
You'll not its magic pow'r reverse !
Or that you should refuse such measures
As might contribute to our pleasures ?

The Count de Lanoy, whom I met with, about noon, at the house of the Marquis de Prié, asked me, if I knew who that young man was whom he had just seen in the church of Sablons; and who had so much offended every body, by his indecent behavior during the service, that the people were on the point of turning him out. A moment afterwards I learned, by a complimentary note from Voltaire, that it was he himself who had arrived at midnight, and immediately began to signalize himself in that very modest manner.

In the afternoon I went to see him, and the next day introduced him to the Marquis de Prié, who was then Governor to the Princess de la Tour, and at other houses where I was acquainted; and where, to my great confusion, he behaved no better than he had done in the church of Sablons. He continued at Brussels about three weeks, during which I was obliged to suffer, for the expiation of

The answer returned to this *placet* was as follows:

Love form'd you, charming Rupelmonde,
 Of taste both arbiter and guide,
 And, while you graceful sit enthron'd,
 To give you pleasure is our pride.
 So much to shew our zeal we seek,
 To-morrow shall, to pay you tribute,
 The tragedy and the critique,
 The author and the piece exhibit.

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my sins, whatever importunity, extravagance, the spirit of dissipation, and incurable conceit could inflict on a man of a sedate and reserved disposition.

But, as God has endued me with a patience which frequently turns out more to my disadvantage than my profit, I manifested no kind of uneasiness at his behavior, but continued to heap on him all manner of civilities. He shewed me his poem of the League, which I returned him two days after, advising him, as a friend, to correct the satirical and passionate declamation, in which he had indulged, on every occasion, against the catholic church, the Pope, the secular and regular clergy, and in short against all government ecclesiastical and civil; requesting him to consider, that an epic poem is not to be written in the same manner as a satire, and that the style of Virgil, and not that of Juvenal, should be his model.

At the same time I gave him the praise I thought he deserved for several characters, which appeared to me well drawn, and especially for that of M. de Rosni, which I was afterwards much surprised to find he had retrenched, and substituted in its place that of the Admiral de Coligni, the hero of the protestants, no doubt, but in reality the incendiary of France.

I have since discovered the reason of this alteration to have arisen from a humiliating menace, which he drew on himself, from the late Duke de Sulli, his first protector; whose just indignation he appeased by one of his usual meannesses.

I do not mean to become the champion of my own works. It belongs neither to Voltaire nor me to judge, but to the public only, of whom it appears hitherto my booksellers do not complain.

I am however very ready to inform this pretended wit, that I never knew a word of German, and that, in whatever country I have been, I have always frequented the company of people who spoke French better than he, who understand the propriety and true harmony of the language, and whose ears are not so vitiated as to confound the pronunciation of *père* with that of *guerre*, or to imagine that *amour* and *amour*, taken in the same sense, can be a good rhyme, or to call the correctness of the Malherbes, the Corneilles, and the Racines, ridiculous pedantry.

He went to Holland, with Madame de Rupelmonde, whence I received an account, a short time before he left it, of an infamous transaction of his, intended to produce a quarrel between M. Basnage and M. Le Clerc, had not a seasonable discovery justly turned the indignation of those two learned

learned persons on the author of the mischievous contrivance.

This action, much more odious than his other impertinencies, had ill disposed me to receive him favorably on his return. However, as he was not to stay long at Brussels, I thought it best to conceal my dislike, and we remained on very good terms ; till, one day, having desired me to conduct him to a public walk without the town, he thought proper to repeat to me a poetical piece, written after his manner, and entitled an Epistle to Julia, so filled with the most horrible blasphemies against whatever is most revered in religion, and even against Jesus Christ himself, whose name was every where accompanied by an epithet which I cannot think of without shuddering, in short, so dreadfully impious, that I must have been wanting in my duty both to religion and the public, could I have patiently listened to such an abominable production. Assuming therefore a serious air, I asked him, how he could think of repeating to me such a detestable composition ?

He then pretended to reason in defence of his principles, but I again interrupted him, and told him, unless he changed the discourse I would get out of the carriage. He then said no more, but begged of me not to speak of that piece. This I promised him, and kept my word ; but other

persons, with whom he probably had not taken the same precaution, afterwards mentioned it to me; and, among others, a lady of the first consequence in France, and a Prince whose name will easily be guessed, and whose evidence is equally respectable with his birth and great abilities. I shall mention hereafter on what occasion he changed the title, and softened the expressions of this infamous poem; which, even as it stands at present, strikes libertines themselves with horror.

Such is the man, who, stealing, according to his custom, the end of a song, formerly written by Boileau against Liniere, has dared to say, my writings shall be burnt if possible before their author; forgetting that it is not two years since one of his books,* avowedly written by him, and printed at his expence, with the initial letters of his name, was publicly burnt by the hands of the hangman, and that the decree issued against him on that occasion is still in force.

From that time I perceived he was more reserved to me than before, and at length he took his leave, and went by the way of Marimont, where the Duke d'Aremberg was then hunting; and I afterwards learned at Mons, from this nobleman and two of his gentlemen, that Voltaire had

* The Philosophical Letters.

spoken of me at Marimont, in the most scandalous manner; and a friend of mine, a Colonel, who has since been Major-General and Governor of Dam, told me, that meeting with him at an inn at Mons, he so offended the company, by the abuse with which he loaded me, that they were near throwing him out of the window, and certainly would have done so, had he not taken refuge under the name of the Duke d'Aremberg.

On my return from England, I learned, he had talked of me in the same manner at Paris.

It was then he first thought of that pleasant expression, a Germanism, which has since served for twelve years together, as a trusty toledo, wherewith to combat all my writings, past, present and to come. Some time after, his *Mariamne* was acted, a printed copy of which I received from a friend of mine, to whom I remarked, in my answer, a few of the improprieties which had offended me in this doubly yet ill-begotten brat, whose deformities he endeavored to correct, presenting it to the public as newly born, though hissed from the stage but six months before.

I know not how this letter came to his knowledge, but it soon produced me another anonymous one, in an unknown hand, in which no abuse was spared. To this I returned him an answer in eight lines, telling him, that, "after the manner

manner in which he had treated Jesus Christ, I was not so delicate as to be offended at any insult he might offer; but that I could not but remind him, it became a man who had given the world so powerful a weapon against himself, to be circumspect and careful to avoid creating enemies."

After this I heard nothing of him for eight or nine years, at least nothing relative to myself. His adventure at the Hotel de Sulli, his flight from France, his vagaries at London, and his quarrels with his bookfellers, which every day furnished matter for the Gazettes, till he had engaged that of Utrecht in his interest, did not concern me, either directly or indirectly.

The charitable advice I had given him in my note, it is probable, made him on his return to France change the title of his Epistle to Julia, to that of an Epistle to Urania, and substitute blasphemies less shocking than those he had originally written; in which he contents himself with avowing, he is no christian, and that it is ridiculous to be one. Still, however, it attracted the notice of the police, and he had no other way of escaping, but by affirming the work was not by him, but by the late Abbé de Chaulieu. If this fact be true, as a person worthy of credit has assured me it is,

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we may learn on whom his common place invectives concerning calumny ought to fall?

At length arrived the time when he was to give loose to his rage. M. de Launai, a man of learning, at Paris, with whom I kept up a correspondence, having sent me the tragedy of Zara, which was then acting, together with his remarks on the piece and the author, I answered him in the same style; and this answer having been circulated, contrary to my intention, Voltaire, with whom every new success is the prelude to new absurdities, thought this was the time to ruin my character, and directly produced his famous Temple of Taste; a work that drew on him the indignation of all Paris, for the town espoused my cause with so much warmth, that never was any one more completely revenged than myself, nor any slanderer more effectually mortified than my antagonist, who for three months scarcely dared to shew his head.

At length, however, the public having forgotten his extravagance, he endeavored to regain its good opinion by his *Adelaide*, which failed of success, and by his *Letters on the English Nation*, which, as I have already said, were publicly burnt. I forgot to mention, that, before the publication of his Temple of Taste, I received a letter from M. de Launai, in which he informed me of his
menaces

menaces against myself and him, and added, that, with respect to the last, he had taken care to let him know, if ever he made free with his name, he might expect an immediate reply, and that not with his pen ; the consequence of which was, that this Hero of Parnassus, having met with him at the theatre, apologized in so abject a manner as to excite both his pity and contempt, as I was informed by M. de Launai in his letter.

Such, Sir, is the real state of this dispute, and the cause of his invectives, which I might easily have prevented, if I would have condescended to the overtures of reconciliation made me last year by one of his intimate friends ; and if I had not thought it unworthy of me to enter into a negotiation with a man so universally detested as Voltaire, It would have been no less easy for me to punish the publishers of this abuse, if I had thought proper to avail myself of the rigorous edicts of the magistracy of Amsterdam, against all personal satires and libels ; but it is important to me that the true character of such an enemy should be known, which is best effected by the rage and scurrility of his own writings. I am happy that no such traits are discernable in mine ; and, if necessity has obliged me to lay open some of the shameful actions of which he has been guilty, I can

I can safely affirm, it is not anger which has guided my pen. This is what I gave that unknown friend to understand who offered his mediation, for which I returned him my thanks; but did not accept; assuring him, that the abuse of Voltaire had done me no injury, and could give me no pain, and that I only wished he would behave with more discretion for the time to come.

Boileau, whose example I should always wish to imitate, has taught me by his indifference for the invectives of the Pradons, the Bonnetcorfes, and the Cotins, to despise those of the Lenglets, the Gacons and the Voltaires. My sentiments on this head are known to all my friends, and I have more fully explained them in an Epistle which I wrote some time ago, and which will appear with the first edition of my works. Voltaire may therefore disgorge all the filth he pleases, this is the last answer he will receive from me. I am quite weary of so dirty a business, and, if it should be necessary to say any more on the subject, shall only send to the printer, as I have been frequently solicited to do, a collection of all the jeux d'esprits in prose and verse, and of all the memoirs and letters which I have received, relative to this contest, at different times; especially immediately after the publication of his *Temple of Taste*. I have enough of these to furnish two good volumes.

This

This is the only method in which I can return an answer with honor, except, however, a passing salutation as occasion may serve in my future writings. At present this may suffice to give you the information of which you was so desirous, and likewise to warn him, that he whose own house is made of glass, ought not to throw stones at that of his neighbor.

Enghein, May 27, 1736.

M. de VOLTAIRE'S ANSWER* to the
preceding Letter.

GENTLEMEN,

A SIMPLE kind of man, by name Rousseau, has printed in your Journal a long letter relative to me, in which, luckily for me, there is nothing but slander, and, unluckily for himself, not the least resemblance to wit. The reason why this piece is so very bad, gentlemen, is, that it is entirely his own; neither Marot, Rabelais, nor d'Ouville have furnished him with a single idea.

* Rousseau's letter has appeared in more than ten different collections, though that of Voltaire has but seldom been published. We insert it here with the more pleasure, as it is to be found in no edition of his works. We have added some short but necessary notes.

This

This is the second time in his life he has trusted to his own invention, and he never succeeds when he invents. His lawsuit with M. de Saurin ought to have rendered him more prudent. But it has already been observed of him, that, though his works are extremely labored, he is not yet sufficiently corrected. He has long been excluded from all good company, and is continually doing his utmost, by the verses he at present writes, to get himself excluded from the number of the poets. With respect to the facts which he has advanced against me, it is well known his testimony deserves no credit; and, as to his verses, I only wish he may continue to write in the same style, whenever he attacks respectable characters.

He has presented you, gentlemen, with an insipid romance of the manner in which his knowledge of me commenced. I shall now, in a short and simple story, lay before you the real truth.

He begins by saying, that some ladies of his acquaintance took him one day to the Jesuits college, where I was then a scholar; and that he was desirous of seeing me, because I had gained some prizes. But he ought to have added, he made this visit, because his father having been shoemaker to mine during twenty years, my father had formerly procured him a place with a lawyer, where it had been much to his credit if he had

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continued; but which he lost for having disowned his birth. It may likewise be added, that my father, my relations, and all those under whom I studied, forbade me to see him, and so bad was his character, that when any scholar had committed a fault, of a certain kind, he was sure to be told, you will become an absolute Rousseau.

It is true that about 1720, I accompanied a French lady of distinction who was going to Holland. Rousseau may say, if he pleases, I went in the *suite* of this lady. A servant always employs the terms most familiar to him; every one speaks his own language. We passed by Brussels; Rousseau pretends I heard mass very irreverently, and that he learned, with horror, the indecency of my behaviour, from the Comte de Lanoy; for he always likes to cite great names in matters of small importance. I might perhaps have manifested some little levity during the celebration of the mass. The Comte de Lanoy, however, says, Rousseau is a liar, and makes a very improper use of his name to support his impertinent and groundless assertions. I am very sorry for any such indiscretion, but it certainly does not become M. Rousseau to make such a reproach. Is it decent for the author of so many licentious epigrams, and infamous couplets against his benefactors and friends,

friends, in short the author of the *Moyfade**, to accuse me of having talked in church, sixteen years ago? I pity the poor man, but let us continue our story.

First, he says, he presented me to the Governor of the Low Countries. Vanity is very powerful. It is much more probable that I was introduced by the lady whom I had the honor to accompany: but men always make vanity supply the deficiencies of education.

At length, however, I met with him at Brussels, and shewed him my *Henriade*. He reproaches me, I know not why, for having in this Poem taken the part of the best of Kings, and the greatest man Europe has produced, against the priests, by whom he was calumniated and persecuted. I am willing, however, Rousseau should espouse the cause of monks, while I defend that of Henry IV.

He was much surprized, he says, to find I had substituted Admiral de Coligni to Rosni. Our critic is not deeply read in history. These little absurdities are very common with those who only possess the talent of arranging words in a certain order. Admiral Coligni was the head of a powerful party, in the time of Charles IX. and was killed when Rosni was only seven years old.

* The *Moyfade* was not written by Rousseau; M. de Voltaire has confessed this elsewhere.

Rosni afterwards became the minister and favorite of Henry IV. How then could I retrench the character of Rosni, from the *Henriade*, to substitute that of Admiral Coligni? The fact is, I have made Duplessis Mornay supply the place of Rosni. Rousseau, perhaps, does not know that this Duplessis Mornay was a warrior, a learned man, a rigid philosopher, in one word, exactly such a character as I had to describe. But we must permit a mere rhimer to be a little ignorant. Let us proceed to matters of more consequence.

We sometimes find people who understand but very indifferently an occupation they have followed all their lives. It is remarkable that Rousseau knows not even how to slander. The origin of his hatred to me, according to his own account, arose, in part, from my having spoken of him in a most opprobrious manner to the Duke d'Arenberg. I know not what he means by opprobrious. If I had said, he was banished France by an arret of parliament, and that he wrote contemptible verses at Brussels, I should have done him no injustice; but I mentioned nothing of all this, and in order to confute this foolish falsity, as well as the rest, I shall here give the copy of a letter I have just received from the Duke d'Arenberg.

I A M

Enghien, Sept. 8, 1736.

I AM much displeased, Sir, to find my name mentioned in the *Bibliothèque Française*, in an article relative to you. I am made to speak very improperly and falsely.

I am, Sir, your most
obedient humble servant,
D'AREMBERG.

Let us now see if he has been more fortunate in his other accusations. I recited to him, he says, an Epistle against the Christian Religion. If he means the *Moyfide*, he knows very well I am not the author of that piece. He asserts, I have been proceeded against by the Police of Paris, as the writer of this pretended Epistle; to determine this it will be only necessary to consult the registers, in which his name may be repeatedly found, but mine no where*. Rousseau would rejoice had I written against religion; but I cannot bring myself to imitate him in any thing.

He has heard it said, hypocrisy is necessary, if we wish to triumph over our enemies: and I grant he has had recourse to this admirable expedient.

* The manner in which M. de Voltaire defends himself against this accusation, unfortunately too true, is more ingenious than satisfactory.

Inur'd t' affronts Rousseau had been,
 With groans and catcals, chased the scene.
 From Paris was, with cudgels, driv'n;
 'Mong Germans, then, to be forgiv'n,
 And act the devotee, he ran:
 He could not act the honest man.

But to act the devotee is not alone sufficient to do mischief, some address is necessary. God be thanked, Rousseau's incapacity is equal to his hypocrisy: without this counterpoise he had been dangerous indeed.

The pretended reasons of the pretended rupture between this great man and myself, therefore, are, that I have behaved inattentively at mafs, that I have recited verses written after the manner of the Moyfades, and that I have spoken of him in terms not sufficiently respectful to the Duke d'Arenberg. I shall now proceed, gentlemen, to explain the real cause of his hatred; and will consent, which is saying a great deal, to be esteemed as infamous as my accuser, if I advance a single word it is in his power to disprove.

He recited to the lady I had the honor to accompany, and myself, a kind of allegory against the parliament of Paris, under the title of the Judgment of Pluto: a wretched piece, in which he is very liberal of invectives against the Attorney-General and his Judges.

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He concludes, as well as I can remember, by these lines :

And may their skins, stretch'd on the justice-bench,
Hereafter be a seat to their successors.

These are imitated from an epigram by M. Boindin against Rousseau, which is universally known. The difference between this epigram and the verses of Rousseau is, that the epigram is good.

He afterwards recited a work, the title of which is no proof either of an able head or a good heart; it is called the *Palinodia*. You are to be informed, he was the author of an *Epistle to the Duke de Noailles*, then *Comte d'Ayen*. In this work he had said,

His shape behold ! his air ! and, hark !
He sings with music all his own !
From Delphos sure Apollo's flown !

This piece, written in a similar stile throughout, was, as you may suppose, universally ridiculed. However, the Duke still continued to protect, though he despised him; and condescended to give him a place. Could you imagine it ? He wrote a letter, at that very time, filled with invectives against his benefactor. This letter came to the knowledge of the Duke—I affirm nothing but

What that nobleman can prove to be fact; and must add, he possessed so much greatness of soul as to forget the ingratitude of the poet.

Rousseau, as soon as he had left France, wrote his *Palinodia*. He was certainly in the right to disclaim dull panegyric, but his *Palinodia* ought undoubtedly to have been a better production. Unfortunately for him, it merely consisted in speaking ill of his benefactor. Marshal Villars, the friend of the nobleman whom he had insulted, being informed of the insolence of Rousseau, wrote to Prince Eugene in these terms,—“ I hope you will do justice to a * * * who has not been sufficiently punished in France.” This letter, added to the ingratitude with which Rousseau repaid the kindness of Prince Eugene, entirely disgraced him with that Prince. Such, gentlemen, is the origin of all the enmity Rousseau has shewn against me. He imagined I had informed Marshal Villars, yet it is very certain I never spoke to him on any such subject; the truth of which assertion may be easily known from those who are both friends and relations to Marshal Villars. The letter was written to Prince Eugene, before Rousseau had ever read me his wretched *Palinodia*; and when he did read it, I contented myself with saying, I saw plainly that to obtain friends was not his purpose. I confess I told him, with a frankness which I have

have preserved on every occasion, "That his latter works did not please me; and that he would be only considered as having lost his abilities and preserved his venom." The public has justified my prediction; and Rousseau hates me the more because I have told him a truth which daily becomes more conspicuous.

As he had flattered me for a while, it was impossible he should long refrain from writing verses against me; he did so, and insipid enough they were. True it is, at last, in an *Epistle against Calumny*, written about three years ago, I could not avoid, after having shewn the enormity of this crime, mentioning one by whom it had been so frequently committed. You remember what I have said of him,

This aged rhimer cover'd with disgrace, &c.

In these verses I have certainly only expressed the opinion of the public. I have only followed the example of M. de la Motte, the most moderate of men, who has written thus of Rousseau;

Know'st thou the Parasite, whose soul
 Envy and jealousy controul;
 And slander with malicious grin;
 Timid, yet impudent, in sin;
 Who surest can, with secret guile,
 Infuse his poison in a smile;

The Plagiarist, whose rancorous gall,
 Which sternest critic might appal,
 So oft infected hath our eyes ?
 If such thou know'st, him I despise ;
 Contemptuous view his abject pride,
 Tho' to the gods he were allied *.

Who would imagine M. Rousseau would dare complain of having been slandered ? Permit me here to remind you of an incident in an old Italian comedy. Harlequin having robbed a house, and not finding afterwards all the effects he had taken, begins to cry stop thief with all his might. Rousseau supposes, in the first place, that my Epistle on Calumny is addressed to a respectable lady, daughter of the Baron de Breteuil, one of his first masters. But who has told him it is not addressed to one of the daughters of the Duke de Noailles, or M. Rouillé, or Marshal Tallard ? For has he ever had a master whom he has not repaid with ingratitude, and at length obliged to drive him from his service ? I am very willing this epistle should be supposed to be addressed to the daughter of the Baron de Breteuil ; who is

* These verses, which M. de Voltaire applies personally to Rousseau, are, in the Ode which M. de la Motte addressed to this poet, only intended as the general picture of a man deserving detestation, " though to the gods he were allied." Never let La Motte fully his writings by lampoons.

mar-

married to a man of the highest rank, and is illustrious for the honor she reflects on the fine arts, by her genius and knowledge, which she in vain endeavors to conceal.

This only serves to shew how bold Rousseau is in his wickedness, and how impudent in his falsehoods. He cries out he is slandered, and that he has never written verses against M. de Breteuil. Would you know from whom I received the intelligence, he thus dares to contradict? From the very person to whom he was weak enough to confess it; the daughter of that same M. de Breteuil; who, as well as I, is acquainted with the fact, and in whose presence I have the honor to write this truth, so universally known.

In vain does he plead he has still in his possession several letters from the Baron de Breteuil; his epistle, in verse, to that nobleman is equally ineffectual; for what do they both prove? Why the excessive indulgence of the Baron de Breteuil, and the extreme insolence of his domestic. Is this the only instance of his writing both for and against his benefactors? Has he not deified M. de Francine, after having satirized him in the most shameful manner in the Francinade? He wrote this satire because his unsuccessful Operas had been rejected by M. de Francine, and he afterwards

afterwards filed him divine, because Madame de Bouzoles having had the goodness to make a collection for him when he was in Switzerland, M. de Francine was generous enough to contribute twenty louis. I myself have, by the same rule, some title to a similar epithet, for I subscribed four louis on that occasion*.

Indeed he is much in the wrong to wish ill to me; for, exclusive of the connexion between my father and his, I have at present a *valet de chambre* who is his kinsman, and a very honest fellow. This poor lad very often asks my pardon for the paltry verses of his relation†.

After all, is it my fault, that he was caned by the Sieur Pécour, in the Rue Cassette, for having written and acknowledged those couplets which are mentioned in his criminal process.

* Can any thing justify or excuse M. de Voltaire for making this public mention of the alms he pretends to have bestowed on Rousseau? Four louis is a large sum for such a child, as M. de Voltaire must then have been, to have given. And supposing he had been so generous, ought he to have upbraided him with it? Is there any necessity thus openly to proclaim every thing we do; and sometimes what we do not do?

† Voltaire has frequently repeated this in conversation; 'Was he then of so low an original?' said M. *** one day to him. 'Do you not know who was his father,' returned Voltaire? — 'Indeed I do not, answered M. ***, I imagined him the son of Pieter or of Horace.'

Jack

Jack Ketch will soon, I firmly hope,
 Stop Berrin's hissing with his rope :
 While, at the ladder's foot, his whip
 Shall make the dancing Pécour skip.

Is it my fault that he received the same treatment from M. de la Faye, though he afterwards appeased him by the mediation of M. de la Contade, and an offer of fifty louis, which M. de la Faye never received; that he slandered M. Saurin; that he was banished by a perpetual arret; that he is the abhorrence of every one; or (which hurts him most) that he has written such a number of miserable rhimes?

Is it my fault that he has composed *Les Fous Chimériques*, *Le Caffé*, *La Ceinture Magique*, &c. I am not responsible for these things.

To better his cause, he has associated himself with the Abbé des Fontaines, author of a periodical work, of which you have heard; and this Abbé sent, from time to time, libels against me into Holland.

It is proper you should know, that, in 1724, I procured this Abbé his release from the Bicêtre; where he would otherwise have been confined for the rest of his days. This is a fact universally known. I have still letters from him, in which he confesses that he owes to me both his honor
 and

and his life. He has since been my translator. I had written in English an Essay on the *Epopœa*. He rendered it into French, and his translation was printed at Paris.

It is true there were as many mistakes in the sense as there were lines. In it he said, that the Portuguese had discovered America. He translated *cakes eaten by the Trojans*, by this expression, *the devouring hunger of Cacus*. He took the English word cakes to signify Cacus, and the Trojans to be cows. I corrected these errors, and printed his translation at the end of my *Henriade*, till I could find time to write my Essay on the *Epopœa* in French; for I had composed it in the taste of the English language, which is exceedingly different from ours. When I had finished it, I placed it at the end of my *Henriade*, printed in France. The Abbé des Fontaines could never forgive my thus making use of what was my own.

From that time he has incessantly attacked both my reputation and that of the *Henriade*. I shall not answer him, nor endeavor to decry his verses. Of these he has published a large volume, of which scarcely any body has heard. I myself am unacquainted with its title; his character however is a little better known.

Such, gentlemen, are the respectable persons I have for my enemies. You may therefore boldly affirm,

affirm, whenever you meet with any wretched verses pointed at me, they are written by Rousseau; or any despicable criticisms, in prose, the Abbé des Fontaines is their author.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your, &c.

M. de Voltaire did not content himself with this; he made enquiries into the events of the Life of Rousseau, as appears from his letters to the Abbé Mouffinot. The following Memoirs were the fruit of these enquiries. The author of them endeavors to conceal himself, but he is sufficiently discovered by the elegant simplicity of the style, and his enmity to Rousseau. This work is little known in France, because it was not printed in that kingdom. The copy we have made use of is more accurate than those which have hitherto appeared.

It is to be remarked, that it was one of the singularities of Voltaire to make these enquiries into the history of his enemies. What a quantity of information had he collected concerning the late M. Freron, La Baumelle, the Abbé Nonotte, and several others! If all his letters were to be published, the truth of what is here advanced would be very manifest.

Fon-

Fontenelle acted in a quite contrary manner. He seldom knew of the criticisms published on his works; or, if they came in his way, by any accident, never attempted to discover their authors. This at once insured his peace and reputation, which nothing can hurt so much as these acrimonious replies, and which are too often made to reasonable and well-founded objections.

M. de Voltaire should have remembered, with tranquillity, that the public seldom adopt, but generally despise, criticisms not well-founded; but, he was always fearful of losing even a single leaf of his laurel. Hence arose his anxiety when he was informed of any inimical pamphlet. He could scarcely recover his spirits for several days. "How! (said M. Palissot to him, on some occasion, when he showed uneasiness at the teasing of some of these literary insects) Can a single pismire cause you so much pain?" "It is not, said he, a single pismire: it is a nest of pismires." In this manner did he magnify the number of his enemies to excuse his own extreme sensibility.

MEMOIRS OF J. B. ROUSSEAU.

By M. DE VOLTAIRE.

With Notes to explain and correct certain Facts.

S E C T. I.

His Birth, Education, and Comedy, entitled
Le Caffé: Or, The Coffee-House.

JEAN-BAPTISTE ROUSSEAU was born at Paris, in the Rue des Noyers, in the year 1670.* God, who disposes as he pleases of what is called greatness or meanness among men, gave him a humble origin. His mother had been long a servant, and his father was a journeyman shoemaker; but having received some money by the death of a relation, became a master of eminence. He was also Syndic of the Cordwainer's company, and respected by his neighbors as an exceedingly honest man; a reputation no less difficult to acquire among the common people than among those of higher rank.

The father spared no expence to give his son an education superior to his birth, and at first intended him for the church; a profession where a for-

* Or rather April 6, 1671, as appears by an extract from the register inserted in the Année Littéraire.

tune is often made by merit, though unassisted by family connections ; and often even without either ; but the young man's morals were no ways conformable to these views.

Rouffseau's father, by a singular fatality, for a long time made shoes for M. Arouet, treasurer to the chamber of accounts, father to him who has since been so much celebrated by the name of Voltaire, and who has had such violent contests with Rouffseau.

The Sieur Arouet undertook to place young Rouffseau with an attorney, of the name of Gentil ; but he shewed no more inclination for the law than he had done for the church. He read Cæcilius, went to the play, and paid no attention to his business.

One day his master having ordered him to carry some papers to a counsellor of the parliament, young Rouffseau said to the counsellor, with all the vanity of youth, M. Gentil, friend, has desired me to leave these papers with you, as I came by. The counsellor coming the same day to the attorney's, and seeing this young man at the desk, informed the master of the contemptible vanity of his clerk. The attorney chastised his insolence, and his clerk immediately renounced the law. This adventure procured France a distinguished poet.

Rouffseau

Rouffeau began his poetical career in 1694, by the comedy of *Le Caffé*; (The Coffee-House); manifestly the attempt of a young writer, without experience either in the world, in literature, or the practice of the theatre, and which shewed no marks of genius. A young officer, who was with me at its representation, made the following impromptu on the occasion:

If prone to sleep we coffee take,
To keep us chearful and awake;
What strange dull spell is then Rouffeau's
O'er coffee thus to make us doze?

This comedy produced the author some money, but no reputation. He wrote a good hand, however, and that was much more profitable to him than his wit; for it procured him a clerk's place in the secretary's office of M. de Tallard, Ambassador to England, and afterwards Marshal of France.

His genius for poetry and satire soon began to show itself; he had the impudence to write an epigram against M. de Tallard, who contented himself with dismissing him from his service.

S E C T. II.

His first Masters, and satirical Pieces.

ROUSSEAU returned to France poor enough, and entered into the service of the Bishop of Viviers.

G

There

There he composed the *Moyfado*,* and the Bishop having seen this work, in the hand-writing of Rousseau, obliged him to quit his house with ignominy. Necessitated to seek a new master, he procured the place of secretary's clerk to the Swedish embassy, where he remained but a short time. His taste and talents led him to Paris. On his return, having procured a letter to the Baron de Breteuil, at that time usher to the embassies, he recited to him some of his verses, and as M. de Breteuil was possessed of considerable understanding and taste, he retained him in quality of his secretary and man of letters, and shewed him the utmost kindness.

In great houses there are frequently little quarrels among the principal domestics. Rousseau, who possessed that dangerous vanity which the superiority of genius never fails to inspire, when it is not restrained by reason, was treated with some disrespect, in a journey he made with some servants of the family to Preuilly, an estate of the Baron's in Touraine. Rousseau revenged his quarrel with the servants on the master. He composed a little satire against him, which he entitled the Baron-

* The *Moyfado* neither was nor could be by Rousseau; it was the production of some wretched rhimer, who either is, or at least deserves to be forgotten.

nade,

made, as he had entitled his piece against Moses the Moysade, and as he has since called that against M. de Francine the Francinade. He confessed this several years after to the Dutchess of St. Pierre, sister to M. de Törcey. The report of this satire reached the ears of the Baron, but Rousseau protested, with an oath, it was all slander. It was easy to persuade his master to believe him, for he had given no copy of this satire.

His master therefore still continued his patron, and placed him with M. Rouillé, Intendant of the Finances, in hopes that M. Rouillé would procure him some employment, by means of which he might be enabled to cultivate his poetical talent. M. Rouillé had himself a considerable inclination to poetry, and wrote several passable songs; there it was Rousseau composed his first epistles in the style of Marot, and several ballads.

M. Rouillé had a mistress, named Mademoiselle de Louvancourt, who had a very fine voice, and for whom he sometimes wrote songs. Rousseau, to oblige them, learned a little music, and wrote the words of some cantatas, which were set to music by Bernier, master to the holy chapel. These were the first cantatas ever written in the French language. He afterwards retouched them. Some of these are very excellent. We are

indebted to him for this new species of poetical composition.

The life he led with M. Rouillé, might have been very agreeable ; but his unfortunate inclination to satire soon deprived him both of his happiness and hopes. M. Rouillé had written a song beginning thus :

To thee, fair Louvancourt, we every day
See some new lover sigh and fall a prey.

Rouffseau parodied it in this insolent manner :

To strumpet Louvancourt we every day
See some poor simple lover fall a prey.

The remainder contains expressions which modesty will not permit to be repeated.

Rouffseau was now once more turned out of his patron's house in disgrace ; and this is the reason that in the editions of his works, which he has published in Holland, he has struck out the name of M. Rouillé from the dedication of an ode which he had addressed to him, and which began thus :

Noble inheritor of all those virtues,
Which in old Rhea's reign were so adored.

He likewise meant Mademoiselle de Louvancourt, and her two sisters, by these verses in one of his violent satires.

Three

Three wolves, or would be Graces, out of date,
Who all, by turns, my fame assassinate.*

S E C T. III.

His Comedy of the Flatterer ; his Operas.

ROUSSEAU, now deprived of every resource, determined to try his success at the theatre. As he played pretty well in comedy, his first intention was to form a company and commence actor ; but this he never put in practice. However, at his leisure intervals, he had written a comedy, entitled the Flatterer, composed in a style much superior to his other piece, The Coffee-House. This was acted in 1695. It was well written, natural, and the plot ingeniously conducted. It had a kind of success, though it was in fact only a feeble and rather cold imitation of the Tartuffe of Moliere.

His father, who was still alive, and still kept his shop in the *Rue des Noyers*, having heard it reported, that Rousseau had written a play which had excited the admiration of all Paris, thought himself too well paid for every pains he had bestowed on the education of a son who did him such great honor ; though the author, since he had risen

* The word wolves (*louves*) has in the French a punning allusion to the name of Louvancourt.

to so much notice in the world, had despised the shoemaker, and the son had forgotten the father. Nevertheless, paternal tenderness made the old man hasten to the play-house, where, having paid his money, and taken his place in the pit, he began to boast to every body that he was father to the author, with all that satisfaction which a simple tradesman and a tender parent might be expected to show. Rousseau, who was then in the pit, was in haste to get out, fearing an interview which might humble his vanity. His father followed him, and in the presence of La Torilliere, an excellent actor, who was one of his customers, threw himself on his neck, and melting into tears, "Now, said he, can you doubt that I am your father." "You, my father!" cried Rousseau; and, abruptly tearing himself from him, immediately quitted the place; leaving the spectators in amazement and the father in despair.

This action did more harm to his reputation than all the comedies ever written could have done it honor. M. Boindin, Attorney-General to the French treasury, who was then young, was present at this scene, and told him openly the action was detestable, and that his vanity did not even understand its own interest; for that to have acknowledged his father would have increased his glory, and a disavowal like this only ought to have incited

incited his blushes. This was the cause of that enmity which Rousseau manifested as long as he lived against M. Boindin, whom he presently attacked with much asperity in his epistle to Marot.*

Rousseau then changed his name, and took that of *Verniettes*. This was the name of a young man with whom he had been clerk. He was introduced by this name to the Prince of Armagnac, *Grand Ecuyer* of France ; but, unfortunately for him, his father made shoes for the Prince of Armagnac, and came one day to bring the Prince a pair while his son was with him.

The father wept with grief and vexation, and complained to the Prince, who reprimanded Rousseau in the most mortifying manner, but to no purpose.

His father died with chagrin soon after, and the son would not even go into mourning.

A young page, who was in the Prince's apartment when Rousseau, after having assumed the

* M. Racine, the younger, in a letter which is published with the letters of Rousseau, affirms, that poet never denied his father. He says he has been informed by persons whose character renders their veracity indubitable, that Rousseau never was ashamed of his family ; that, on the contrary, he made it his boast, that in his origin he resembled Horace ; and that he never had caused his father to shed any tears, except tears of joy.

name of *Verniettes*, was discovered by his father, immediately quoted the anagram of *Verniettes*; a word from which some enemies of Rousseau had extracted these others, *Tu te renies*, thou deniest thyself.

And here I cannot help recollecting the end of an epigram which M. Boindin wrote about that time. It concluded thus ;

Apollo, wrathful, then decreed,
This modern Marfyas should be flay'd.
The skin his father thus might use,
If not to make, to cobble shoes,

After the comedy of the Flatterer, Rousseau became intimate with M. de Francine, maitre d'hôtel to the King, son-in-law of the celebrated Lulli, and at that time director of the opera. M. de Francine engaged Rousseau to compose the opera of Jason. This tragedy, set to music by Colasse, had no success. However, M. de Francine, as an encouragement, gave Rousseau a hundred pistoles. The year following he brought out his Adonis, which met with the same fate; but M. de Francine, notwithstanding the ill success of these two unfortunate essays, had the generosity to present the author with a thousand livres. Yet Rousseau thought himself ill paid, and in revenge wrote the *Francinade*, a most virulent satire, which he printed

printed under the name of *Masque de Laverne*, and in which he substituted the name of Mancine for that of Francine.* This alteration was made in the edition of Soleure, because M. de Francine had the goodness to give twenty louis d'ors, at a collection which Madame de Bouzole made for Rousseau, when he had taken refuge in Switzerland. This remarkable fact is related in a journal printed at Amsterdam in 1736. These journals are seldom much to be depended on, but of the truth of this I was an eye-witness.

Perceiving his operas had no success, as indeed his genius was not suited to that kind of composition, he returned to comedy, and wrote *Le Capricieux*; but this piece was still more unsuccessful than his operas, and the author had himself the mortification to be hissed on his appearance at the theatre.

* Rousseau denies he had M. de Francine in view when he wrote that allegory. In fact, it contains nothing but general traits of character, which scarcely could be applied to that amateur. Rousseau also wrote, to M. de Breteuil, a letter which does him much honor, praying him to refuse the money sent for him by individuals. He would accept none but the presents of the Duke of Orleans.

SECT.

S E C T. IV.

An Account of some famous Epigrams,
and other poetical Pieces.

At that time there was a coffee-house in Paris much frequented by the literati, philosophers, musicians, painters, and poets. M. de la Fontenelle went there sometimes. M. de la Motte; M. Saurin, a celebrated geometrician; M. Danchet, a very indifferent poet, but a man of considerable learning and respectable character; the Abbé Alary, son of an apothecary of repute, and a young man of extensive knowledge; M. Boin-din, Attorney-General to the French treasury; M. de la Faye, Captain in the guards, of the academy of sciences; and his brother, who died, Secretary to the cabinet, a man of fashion, and who wrote some agreeable verses; the Sieur Roi, who displayed considerable talents in composing dances; the Sieur de Rochebrune, who wrote songs; and many other persons of learning were there every day: all new works were criticised by them, and often with much severity. They frequently wrote spirited epigrams and lively songs; in short, it was the school of wit; in which there was often no small mixture of licentiousness.

La

La Motte Houdart, after having from a weakness of mind, which, certainly, was ridiculous enough, remained a whole year at La Trappe as a novice, returned to Paris. His genius for poetry began to appear. His first attempt was a ballet, entitled, *l'Europe Galante*, in 1697. He read it to Messrs. Boindin, Saurin, and La Faye the younger, who were good judges. They openly said, Rousseau would be wise to renounce writing operas; since a poet had arisen so much his superior, in that species of composition. From that time Rousseau began to hate La Motte. They afterwards both wrote odes, and this hatred increased. La Motte was extremely polite and engaging in his manner; I never knew any one more so. He had always something agreeable to say, and possessed, to a great degree, the art of acquiring friends and extending his reputation. His talents were fitted for every thing, but did not rise above mediocrity, if we except a few odes. In the latter part of his life he became quite blind, but he was still extremely amiable. Everybody preferred his company to that of Rousseau. Indeed, one was not to be compared to the other, either for heart or head; for though Rousseau knew best how to write verses in the style of Marot, or to turn an epigram, and had more of fire and harmony in his odes, he was very far from

from that just and philosophical way of thinking which distinguished La Motte. Rousseau was much the best versifier, but La Motte had most genius, for genius and versification are two very different things. However, in 1700, the opera of Hefione was performed; the words were by *Danchet*, and the music by *Campra*, already known by the *Europe Galante*. This music was prodigiously successful, and even some passages in the poetry had considerable merit, though the piece in general was badly written. Rousseau then wrote a song against Danchet, Campra, Pecour the dancer, and several others. This song was written to one of the airs in Hefione; the groundwork of several of those parodies, which have since been so mischievous. That I am now speaking of ended as follows :

Jack Ketch will soon, I firmly hope,
 Stop Berrin's hissing with his rope ;
 While, at the ladder's foot, his Whip
 Shall make the dancing Pecour skip*.

Pecour was irritated, and accidentally met Rousseau in the Rue Cassette. I was present at the time, and must say, that it is not entirely true (as has been asserted by the Bibliothèque

* The reader will perceive the necessity of reprinting these verses.

Fran.

Françoise) that Pecour assaulted Rousseau. He would have done it had not I interfered. Rousseau asked his pardon, and solemnly swore he was not the author of that song. Pecour would not believe him, and I parted them. From that time I broke off all connexion with Rousseau, whose character I perceived was odious, though I could not but highly esteem several of his works. I likewise no longer frequented the coffee-house, as I was tired of these quarrels among men of letters, and vexed to see them employ their wit to so bad a purpose. Danchet answered Rousseau in a severe parody, which was likewise on verses from the opera of Hésione.

Thou timid enemy, thou dang'rous friend,
 Ungrateful son, proceed, thy poisons vend;
 Veil with each hypocritic art,
 Thy treach'rous and malignant heart;
 And David now, Petronius now translate:
 Fearless, on all,
 Eject thy gall,
 Theophilus to imitate;
 But, while his stile thou copie'st, dread his fate.

What Danchet said in this song afterwards came to pass; Rousseau underwent much greater mortifications than Theophilus: on which occasion it was said, Who would have supposed Danchet to have been a prophet?

Rous-

Rousseau continued to write more parodies on the verses we have mentioned. They were for the most part aimed at some of those who frequented the coffee-house of the widow Laurent. His composed to the number of seventy-two †, which are still preserved by the curious. Those whom he had attacked did not fail to repay him in the same coin. It was a war of wit, and the public were diverted at the expence of the combatants. M. de la Faye the younger, among others, wrote the following epigram, which was much admired.

T'other day, at Parnassus, a poet appeared,
 Who by virulent satire had made himself feared ;
 On every one near him his venom he spit,
 With no small effrontery, and some little wit :
 But old Clement came in, and, perceiving his own,
 Made, without further scruple, the plagiarist known ;
 After him honest Francis demanded a score
 Of his verses, and Melin full as many more ;
 Till each poet reclaiming his sense and his fallies,
 Nought remain'd of his works but their nonsense
 and malice.

† Among these seventy-two, it cannot be denied, but some were written by Rousseau, who very soon made an improper use of his talent for epigram ; but his enemies likewise made an improper use of his name, by attributing to him things equally foolish and malevolent, which he neither did nor could write.

Rous-

Roufféau had need of a protector, and he found a spirited one in the person of the Duke de Noailles, who introduced him to court. M. de Chamillard gave him the place of superintendant in a subordinate branch of the customs. He had the satisfaction to see one of his comedies acted in the presence of the Dukes of Burgundy, by some of the principal nobility, and even several of the Princes of the Blood. This piece was *La Ceinture Magique*, and is not much superior to his *Coffee-House*. If the author had only written dramatic pieces, he would at present have been unknown, and probably more happy. A spirit of emulation and contest, with M. de la Motte, prompted him at that time to compose verses both on sacred and profane subjects; among which some are very excellent. He wrote his Epistle to the Muses, and that to Marot, in which, among many prolix and unnatural passages, there are also many most beautiful. Happy, indeed, were these works, had they not been disgraced by a virulence which must disgust all good men. Of his epigrams, likewise, several were excellent in their kind: such, among others, was that against the Jesuits.

It were to be wished he had not dishonored this talent, by the mad licentiousness in which he indulged, in his epigrammatic compositions; which are often immoral, obscene, and shocking. One
would

would think it impossible for a person of taste to verify such infamous subjects, so opposite to the first property of a good epigram, which is to excite innocent laughter. But these very infamies, which rendered him the object of detestation to people of respectable character, procured him the favour of libertines. He translated the Psalms, to please the Duke of Burgundy, who was a religious Prince, and wrote obscene verses to introduce himself to the feasts of the Parisian debauchees. One day, when the Duke of Burgundy reproved him for mixing in such a manner sacred things with profane, he replied, that his epigrams were the *Gloria Patri* to his Psalms †.

The French academy having proposed, in 1707, as a subject for the poetical prize, THE GLORY OF THE KING, SUPERIOR TO ALL EVENTS, La Motte and Rousseau wrote for the prize. Both were very secret, none of the judges knew the names of the candidates. La Motte deserved and obtained it unanimously. His ode is very excellent, it is well known, and begins thus :

† It is not likely that Rousseau, who was not destitute of sense, nor unacquainted with politeness, ever made so indecent an answer to the Duke of Burgundy. This reply was probably the bon-mot of some enemy, and it was afterwards thought laughable to attribute it to Rousseau himself.

Oh

Oh Truth! whose beauties never know
 Reverse or change, but, still the same,
 Alone can grant a lasting fame
 To all th' applauses we bestow——

Two stanzas of Rousseau's ode still remain,
 he never dared print more. The following is
 one:

In these illustrious deeds let France behold
 The mighty monarch, whose propitious reign
 So many victories saw. Let her that reign
 Revere, which her firm seat of empire fixed
 Glorious and immortal! He, high-minded,
 Fortune led, triumphant, over the world:
 Fortune, who, over him, could never triumph.

The other stanzas were very different from
 this. I remember hearing them repeated by the
 late De Brie. But though Rousseau was much
 inferior to La Motte in this ode, as well as in
 his operas, he was much superior in his other
 odes, and will always be acknowledged the best
 poet.

Rousseau had been admitted a member of the
 Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres. This
 was a kind of noviciate, introductory to obtain-
 ing a place in the French Academy. He had
 procured his admission through the interest of
 the Abbé Bignon, the professed patron of letters;

H

but

but had the misfortune to incur, almost at the same instant, the anger of the Abbé, and that of the Duke de Noailles. He wrote verses against them precisely at the time they were employed in doing him the most essential service *. I know not whether the Duke de Noailles and the Abbé Bignon knew of these verses, but I know M. de Longpierre shewed the Duke de Noailles a letter from Rousseau to M. d'Uffé, full of ingratitude against, and laughing at, the Duke, his Benefactor.

M. d'Uffé was a man of considerable merit and an admirer of the fine arts. He wrote a tragedy entitled *Peloepe*, which was never acted, though much esteemed by the critics; and another named *Cosroes*, which he altered from *Rotrou*, and which was performed, though it was not equal to his *Peloepe*. He patronized Rousseau, and introduced him to the *Marechal de Vauban*, his father-in-law; but could not support him against the resentment of the Duke de Noailles. About the same time Rousseau affronted M. de Fontenelle, by several epigrams, which, though they possessed not sufficient wit to entertain the public, were virulent enough to incense him whom they attacked.

* This assertion may very reasonably be doubted, especially as M. de Voltaire has produced no proof.

Thus

Thus circumstanced, he solicited a place in the French academy, after having done all in his power to prevent his succeeding, and even having spoken with contempt of the academy itself. Indeed, it is remarkable, that almost all the men of wit have written epigrams against the French academy, and yet at the same time have intrigued to obtain admission. M. de Voltaire is the only one who has never* satirized it, nor ever taken any step to be admitted a member †.

M. de la Motte, author of several works then in repute, and who had no enemies, became likewise a candidate. Rousseau wrote verses against La Motte, and decried him wherever he came.

* Never is a strong expression: to credit this assertion we must be unacquainted with these verses, addressed by M. de Voltaire to the Abbé Chaulieu.

Dear Abbé, I again have sent
The verses you so kindly lent;
In their insipid beauties we
Th' Academy, most potent, see:
How opposite to wit, and you,
That Pegasus which never flew,
Bestriding which, we see La Motte
Jog on, in cold rhetoric trot;
Or Danchet, full as bad as he!
But let this rest 'twixt you and me.

† The efforts made by M. de Voltaire to obtain a seat in the Academy will presently be seen.

La Motte contented himself with addressing and lavishing praise on each of the Academicians. It must be confessed La Motte's flatteries approached meanness; but Rousseau, with the most extravagant asperity, attacked, at once, the Academicians, La Motte, and his friends. At length La Motte, losing his patience, replied to Rousseau, in a very excellent ode on Personal Merit; in which are some expressions that prove his indignation to have overpowered the mildness of his disposition.

This ode was highly applauded, at the coffee-house; and Rousseau, mortified and enraged to the greatest degree, replied, by secretly distributing verses against all who frequented the coffee-house, and especially La Motte. The words of these lampoons cannot be repeated by any one who pays any regard to modesty; they were in the style of the song we have already mentioned against Pecour and Camppra, only containing expressions still more cynical.

During this contest, so disgraceful to the human understanding, a person of the name of Autreau, a man of much frankness, though an indifferent painter, and bad poet, wrote a song against Rousseau, which hurt him more than all the affronts he had experienced.

This

This song was in the style of those usually sung on the *Pont-neuf*, and on that account much more irritating.

It was intended to have had it sung on the *Pont-neuf*, and before the door of Rousseau, by the blind ballad singers of Paris: but La Motte, returning to the natural mildness of his character, reconciled himself to Rousseau, notwithstanding the advice of Messrs. Fontenelle, Saurin and Boindin. What is not a little amusing, is, that the reconciliation of these two poets, who had satirized each other, took place at the house of M. Despreaux.

At length, after the death of Thomas Corneille, and another Academician, La Motte obtained a place in the French academy, and Rousseau was rejected.

This refusal incensed Rousseau, and produced another song; which last proceeding excited an indignant emotion in Paris, which has seldom been equalled, and which ended in the utter ruin of a man whose talents would have done great honor to his country, had they been employed to a better purpose.

This song, so abominable and so well known, contains fourteen stanzas against La Motte, Saurin, Boindin, La Faye, the Abbé de Bragelone, Crebillon, and in short against all the friends of La Motte. Copies were privately sent to all those

who were insulted to exasperate them. This happened about Easter, 1711.

One against whom these stanzas were principally levelled, was M. de la Faye, captain in the guards, an excellent geometrician, and a member of the academy of sciences, who had lately married a very respectable woman, and the song reproached that lady with the most infamous actions and the most shameful diseases. M. de la Faye, one morning, met Rousseau near the Palais Royal. He immediately rushed out of his sedan chair, in which he was commonly carried, and caned him heartily. Rousseau took refuge in the Palais Royal, whither La Faye pursued and still continued to beat him; Rousseau lodged an information against La Faye, for having infringed the privileges of the Royal Palace; La Faye another against Rousseau, for being the author of scandalous libels, deserving to be publicly burnt. M. de Contades, then major of the guards, became a mediator between the parties. Rousseau desisted from his prosecution for fifty louis, which La Faye agreed to pay, but of which in the end he was deprived.

He now perceived he was ruined in the opinion of the public, and was at once desirous to free himself from the infamy of having been the author of these verses, and to destroy one of his most inveterate enemies; who had openly declared
against

against him, in a tone so haughty and so contemptuous as to become almost as offensive as the insult he had received from M. de la Faye.

S E C T. V.

ROUSSEAU'S Accusation of SAURIN, and his Banishment by an Arret of Parliament.

THIS enemy was Saurin, a man of a most inflexible character, one who entertained a very ill opinion of other men, and seldom scrupled openly to tell them so. He had been the occasion of hindering Rousseau from coming to the coffee-house. He affected likewise a most rigid philosophy, a great abhorrence of the character of Rousseau, and very little esteem for his talents.

Rousseau imagined the character of Saurin, who had but few friends, would render his destruction easy. Besides, Saurin had in his youth been a minister at Lausanne, where he had been guilty of several offences of a public nature, on which account he had taken refuge in France and turned catholic, though he was rather supposed to be a free-thinker. Rousseau imagined, with no little reason, if he could once procure him to be arrested, enough would easily be found in his papers to effect his ruin. Certain it is Rousseau acted like a madman; and his conduct is a sufficient

H 4

proof

proof that every successive imprudent step leads to still greater folly ; and every new crime to iniquity more confirmed.

He suborned a poor cobbler, by name Arnould, to swear that Saurin had secretly given him the verses to carry to the persons against whom they were written.

When he had provided himself with this witness, he gained over to his party Madame Voisin, wife to the minister for war, who was afterwards chancellor. That lady wrote to Le Compte, lieutenant of the police, desiring him to support Rousseau, and a decree was granted to arrest Saurin, September 24, 1710. He was taken into custody that very day, seized in the midst of his seven children, and carried to the Chatelet, where he was immediately examined. His examination and cross-examination were gone through with so much haste and such apparent partiality as might have terrified the most resolute. This violent proceeding of the lieutenant of the police was severely censured, even before the cause was decided, by the Chancellor de Pontchartrain, and the lieutenant himself received a reprimand so severe that he shed tears.

Though Saurin had no patron, all the enemies of Rousseau, that is to say, almost all the people of Paris, became his friends on this occasion. M. de Fontenelle went to the prison, and offered him his purse,

purse, and every one assisted him and solicited in his behalf. What principally induced the minds of men to espouse his cause, was, that he himself was outrageously attacked in those very verses which Rousseau accused him of having written; and he at once groaned under the abuse so liberally bestowed on him in the song, and the odium of being its author.

He drew up a factum, less to justify himself than thank the public for interesting itself so much in his behalf. I do not believe there is any work of this kind more insinuating or more truly eloquent.

I cannot understand why M. Rollin should assert, in his *Traité des Etudes*, we have no pleadings worthy of being transmitted to posterity; and that this is owing to the modesty of our advocates, who never publish their factums. We have more than fifty pleadings printed, and above a thousand factums; but there is not one comparable to that of M. Saurin. The effect it had cannot be conceived. I remember M. Gaillard, one of the judges, cried out, on reading the passage I am going to cite, if Rousseau were here now, I would have him hanged without further ceremony. The following is what made so great an impression on that judge:

“ This I affirm cannot be the first attempt of
 “ a depraved mind. He must have been long ha-
 “ bituated

" bituated in wickedness who is capable of such
 " excessive villainy. But whom can we suppose
 " more capable than a man who has disowned his
 " father from his infancy; who occasioned his
 " death by his ingratitude; who denied him the
 " last duties of filial affection; who has slandered
 " his masters, his friends, and his benefactors, and
 " who triumphs in his satires, his impudence,
 " and his impiety? Who even carries his au-
 " dacity so far as to ask me—How I can deny hav-
 " ing written the song in dispute, when I have in
 " my possession so many epigrams?—Whereas
 " these very epigrams, he reproaches me for pre-
 " serving, are written by himself."

While this cause, which engaged the attention
 of all Paris, was carrying on, Rousseau appeared
 at the Chatelet. The people were ready to stone
 him. He was accompanied by one De Brie, against
 whom he had formerly written this virulent epi-
 gram :

Usury and poetry, oh strange ! have lately made
 A partnership in trade !
 The torment and the transport, they, we daily see,
 Of that old Jew, De Brie.
 He, at a step, from stocks and cent. per cent. discount,
 Can gain Parnassian mount :
 But his next step, if mercy not at mis'ry mocks,
 Shall set him in the stocks.

It

It was indeed a most instructive scene to behold an accuser appearing with no one to befriend him but the man he had injured ; while the accused had a thousand voices in his favor.

The twelfth of December, 1711, M. Saurin was set at liberty by the sentence of the Chatelet, and permission granted him to proceed against Rousseau and his witnesses.

More than thirty persons attended on him at his enlargement. He went the next day, in company with M. de la Motte Houdart, to dine with M. de Mesmes, the first president, and a prosecution was immediately commenced against Rousseau.

A writ was now issued to arrest Rousseau, who thought it best to ensure his safety by concealment and flight. Madame de Ferioles, so distinguished for her wit, afforded him an asylum for some days, unknown to her husband, who was too much actuated by the hatred the poet had universally excited, to have permitted him to have remained in his house ; and when Rousseau expressed his fears of being discovered by him, Madame de Ferioles replied, " Fear nothing, put on a black wig instead of the light-coloured one you usually wear, and place yourself beside my husband at supper ; I will answer for it he will not know you." In fact, M. de Ferioles, wearied with the business of the day, seated himself at table without enquiring who was
his

his next neighbor. He supped three times with Rousseau, telling him continually he would hang, him were he his judge, while Rousseau defended Rousseau, thus violently attacked, as well as he was able.

He left this retreat and went and sought another at the Noviciate of the J suits ; imagining, if he could engage religion in his interest, he should be safe. He addressed himself to Father Sanadon, who was then at the head of these devotional places of refuge, confessed himself to him, and solemnly protested he was not the author of any of those libels with which he was charged. He requested he might be admitted to take the sacrament, as he was ready to swear by the host he was not guilty. But Father Sanadon did not think it right either to allow him to communicate, or suffer him to take so extraordinary an oath. This is a fact which I have heard Father Sanadon* assert, and of which several Jesuits were informed.

At length, while this suit was depending, he fled from justice, and took refuge in Switzerland, at Soleure, with Comte du Luc, Ambassador from France, to whom he had letters of recommenda-

* It is no ways probable that Father Sanadon should have revealed what passed at confession, between him and one of his penitents.

tion

tion from Madame de Bouzoles, Madame de Ferrioles, and several others.

The parliament having been informed of his flight, pronounced sentence, April 7, 1712. Three of the members were for condemning him to the halter, the rest sentenced him to banishment; and an arret of costs and damages confiscation and banishment was accordingly issued.

S E C T. VI.

His Retreat into Switzerland. The Edition of his Works. His Journey to Vienna to Prince EUGENE.

THIS arret did not prevent the Comte du Luc from receiving Rousseau into his house at Soleure. He at first behaved himself with that prudence it might be expected he would learn from so many indiscretions; crimes, and misfortunes; but, at length, his natural bias was victorious, and he wrote verses against a person in the family, who was a great favorite with the son of the Count. He was, however, still patronized by the father, though he had drawn on himself the aversion of the son. While he remained here, he printed, at Soleure, a part of his works; containing several things, which, as I have already said, are much esteemed. I mean various of his psalms, cantatas,

tas, and epigrams. He had the prudence not to print a pointed ode, which he had written at Paris, against one of his patronesses ; but, as the reasons which engaged him to suppress it no longer exist, I thought it might be agreeable to the reader to give it here:

Mischievous Helen, say, what charms
Allure thy Paris to thy arms ;
That, sunk supine in sloth and shame,
Gazing on thy bewitching eyes,
He thus consents to sacrifice
His former honors and his fame.

Why should a dull inglorious ease
The hardy gallant warrior please ?
Or why should he who oft has shone
Like great Pelides clad in arms,
Resemble through thy fatal charms
Achilles in disguise alone ?

Pleasure and passion, fierce and strong,
The heedless victim urge along,
While reason languishes in chains ;
Love the Circean chalice fills,
And, mindless of the latent ills,
He greedily the poison drains.

Such fruits produce thy am'rous wiles,
Thy treach'rous and pernicious smiles ;
For ah ! how poignant the disgrace,
When the lew'd Syb'rites shameful airs
Conceal the honorable scars
That late adorn'd the soldier's face !

But

But ah! too soon shall he perceive
 How these effeminate joys deceive ;
 Shall own Love's garlands suit but ill
 The warlike trumpet and the drum :
 That Venus' myrtles ne'er become
 Hands which the palms of Mars should fill.

Alas ! thy Lover little knows
 What this insidious calm foretells :
 Nor dreams what storms the surge shall sweep.
 How will he wish, when tempests tear
 His shatter'd, shipwreck'd bark, he ne'er
 Had trusted the perfidious deep !

When winds, now hush'd, shall angry rise,
 And gathering clouds involve the skies ;
 When the offended God's decree
 Shall change to black and horrid night,
 Days which were scenes of such delight,
 To punish blind credulity !

Ah ! simple he who thus receives
 Thy vows and thy false words believes !
 Unmindful still how many more,
 Like oaths, like vows, like artful smiles,
 Like treach'rous and destructive wives,
 Too often have deceiv'd before !

Already Love prepares the blow,
 Which lays the wanton victim low !
 Already see the furies beat !
 Enrag'd, he raves and execrates
 The partial Gods and cruel Fates !
 His constancy and thy deceit !

Whilst

Whilst thou, insulting o'er his pain,
 With cruel scorn and cold disdain,
 Alike despising threats and tears,
 Lur'st some new lover to thy arms,
 Who knows not yet thy baneful charms,
 Thy treach'rous smiles and wanton airs.

Many of the fugitive pieces he printed were not equal to this in strength, but the good infinitely exceeded the bad. What was most blamed in this edition was the preface, in which he attacked, without reason, my colleague, M. de Fresno; a man of wit and abilities, and the author of several excellent comedies, who had been guilty of no other crime against Rousseau than that of publishing several of his fugitive pieces, in the *Mercure Galant*.

In this preface Rousseau gave himself out for a man of the world who wrote verses for his amusement, and became an author contrary to his intentions. "These, says he, are the few works which have given me the name of an author, whether I wished it or not." This vanity, it must be confessed, was intolerable in a man who had passed a part of his life in writing operas and comedies for subsistence. His deification of M. de Francine, in this preface, after having loaded him with the grossest abuse, in his Francinade, was perhaps still more shameful. The
 reason

reason of this apotheosis of M. de Francine, was, as I have already said, a collection made in favor of Rousseau by Madame de Bouzoles, to which M. de Francine subscribed twenty louis d'ors. I have read, in some journal, that young Voltaire also gave something; which is very probable, for it is well known he always made a merit of assisting men of letters. But to deify M. de Francine because he had given him twenty louis, and to abuse him because the opera of Jason brought but a hundred pistoles, were each equally abject.

Rousseau left M. du Luc, and went into the service of Prince Eugene, in which he remained several years. It was expected he would have written the life of that great Prince; but, whether he was in want of memoirs, or felt he did not possess the same talents for prose as for verse, this history was never begun.

S E C T. VII.

His Stay at Brussels; his Quarrel with VOLTAIRE.

FROM Vienna, Rousseau went to Brussels, in expectation of getting some employment from the Marquis de Prié, Governor of the Low Countries. But England was his most advantageous

resource; for while he was in Holland, having paid his court to Lord Cadogan, who was then at the Hague, that nobleman took him to London, and procured him subscriptions for an edition of his works. He returned from England with about five hundred guineas, but his verses were not much to the taste of that nation, and many who had subscribed for them at two guineas fold them again for one.

The reason of this indifference of the English to the poetry of Rousseau is, because its merit consists more in a chosen variety of expressions, and the richness of its rhimes, than in the thought. Besides, whatever is written in the style of Marot requires a thorough knowledge of our language to be, I will not say relished, but understood; and, lastly, the greater part of Rousseau's writings personally regard himself; almost all his epistles have some relation to himself, or his enemies; subjects not very interesting to English readers, and which must soon cease to be so to posterity.

When he returned to Brussels, he, as usual, embroiled himself with his patron. Prince Eugene had manifestly had a coolness towards him for some time; on account of the complaints made against him by several persons of distinction in France. But the real reason of Rousseau's disgrace, with his patron, was occasioned by his unhappy pro-

propensity to satire, which he could never subdue. It seems as if certain men were inclined to certain faults, by the invincible influence of predestination.

When the Comte de Bonneval had that unfortunate quarrel with the Marquis de Prié, which, at last, caused an excellent officer to turn Mahometan, and take upon him the command of the Turkish army : at the time of this disagreement, I say, Bonneval made some verses against Prince Eugene, and Rousseau had the criminal complaisance to heighten the satire, and add several touches of his own. Prince Eugene knew it, but punished him no farther than by depriving him of the annual salary he received, and refusing him the employment he had promised him in the Netherlands.

Rousseau then went to Holland, where he was very ill received on account of an epigram against a Swiss, equally reflecting on the Swiss and the Dutch. The wit of this epigram, if it had any, lay in these two lines :

The manners of a Swiss, disguised ;
By Dutchmen tam'd and civilized.

The face of affairs at Brussels was considerably altered. The Marquis de Prié, Rousseau's enemy, was disgraced, and the Flemish Netherlands were

governed by the Archdutchefs. The Duke d'Aremberg, Prince of the empire, who refided at Bruffels, and was the friend of General Bonneval, protected Rouffeau, and accommodated him with a retreat at Bruffels, at the *petit Hotel d'Aremberg*; where he lived very agreeably, till a new quarrel drove him thence.

This quarrel was with M. de Voltaire; already well known by the only epic poem France can boast; by feveral tragedies, in a taste entirely new, the greateft part of which have met with much applaufe; by the history of Charles XII. better written perhaps than any other history in the French language; by a number of fugitive pieces which are well known to the curious; and, laftly, by his book on the Newtonian Philofophy, which he had long promifed. I cannot pofitively fay what was the occafion of this fo public animofity between thefe two celebrated men. It very probably only arofe from that unhappy jealoufy which commonly torments thofe who afpire to the fame honors.

They have written againft each other a kind of virulent *faſtums*, which have been printed in the *Bibliothèque Françoisé*. Rouffeau afferts, one of the grounds of this quarrel was, that his opponent had one day ſpoken againft him with much vehemence in the prefence of the Duke d'Arem-

d'Aremberg. M. de Voltaire complained of this to the Prince, who answered, 'It was a shameful slander;' and was so offended, at such a liberty being taken with his name by Rousseau, that he turned him out of his house. This fact is proved by a letter from the Duke d'Aremberg, to be found in the *Bibliothèque* for the year 1736.

Rousseau, about that time, printed at Paris three new Epistles; the first addressed to Father Brumoy, the Jesuit, on the subject of tragedy; the second to Thalia, on comedy; and the third to the Sieur Rollin, professor in the college of Beauvais, author of a much esteemed work on the study of the Belles Lettres, and a compilation of ancient history, the first volumes of which were once in great repute.

Rousseau, in the first of these epistles, seems to have intended several poignant strokes at his adversary, M. de Voltaire. In the second, he attacked all the writers of comedy, and pretended, that, since Molière, we have had no comedy of any merit, in which he is certainly mistaken; for, not to mention the inimitable comedies of *Le Joueur*, *Le Grondeur*, *L'Esprit de Contradiction*, *Le Double Veuvage*, and *La Pupille*, we have had *Le Glorieux*, by M. des Touches, formerly ambassador to the court of London; and *Le Préjugé à-la-mode*, by M. de la Chaussée, which are excellent

works in their kind, and have been extremely well received, especially *Le Glorieux*. With respect to tragedy, we shall not easily be brought to admit that *Manlius*, *Ariane*, *Electre*, *Rhadamiste*, *Oedipe*, *Brutus*, *Zaire*, *Alzire*, and *Maximien* are very indifferent pieces.

These three epistles of Rousseau bear the marks of old age. A hard and ungraceful style, which characterises the declining genius of a writer advanced in years, is very visible in them, notwithstanding a few strong and shining passages. What is worse, while he was pretending to give rules to the theatre, he wrote a comedy, entitled, *Les Aieux Chimeriques*, in the same style with *Le Caffé*, or, the Coffee-House. This was in some sort second childhood. The comedy of *Les Aieux Chimeriques*, soon dropt into oblivion, but the three epistles produced a new poetical war. A certain Abbé, named Guyot des Fontaines, who published a kind of Literary Gazette, and who was a writer extremely censorious, possessing considerable learning, but entirely devoid of delicacy or taste, praised these new satires in an extravagant manner, and defended the severe criticisms of Rousseau on all modern authors. Rousseau and Des Fontaines received several answers; but two pieces, attributed to M. de Voltaire, are esteemed the most pointed and passionate. One of these is
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an Ode on Ingratitude, and the other a kind of Allegorical Tale. It is to be lamented, that such a man as M. de Voltaire, who, 'till then, had enjoyed the reputation of never employing his talents to the confusion of his enemies, should ever have condescended to forfeit so glorious a character.

It is true, he thought himself ill-used by Rousseau, and still more by Des Fontaines, who had the greatest obligations to him, for he is said to have been indebted to him for his life. He certainly took him out of the *Bicêtre*, where he was confined for some infamous crimes; and it is affirmed that Des Fontaines was afterwards author of a great number of libels against his benefactor; but it had undoubtedly been more noble, in the man who could write the *Henriade*, not to have descended to such unworthy altercations.

However, we shall give the two pieces as we have received them; in which, we shall see the spirit of a man whose friendship is as warm as his enmity is violent.

THE CRISPINIAD.

The devil was drunk; the devil said,
I've ta'en a frolick in my head!
I'll shape some animal, whose whole
Form and figure, body and soul,

I 4

Shall

Shall make the dullest vilest elf
 Exclaim, " Behold the devil himself !"
 He spoke, and brimstone took, and clay,
 In Styx well steep'd, and work'd away ;
 And laugh'd, as, from th' enfulthur'd earth,
 Each new deformity took birth.
 And, first, a shapeless, pumpkin-head,
 With bristly, stinking hair, and red ;
 Carbuncles, huge, he next conven'd ;
 A front of brags, to mask the fiend ;
 With eye-brows white, and scant, and high ;
 A squinting, black, malicious eye,
 Which Envy spoke, devoid of sense ;
 A wide wry mouth ; a nose immense ;
 A grin sardonian, that might fright
 And make folks shudder at the sight ;
 A spiral neck ; an oval back,
 So warp'd as to invite attack ;
 Thrown up, as 'twere, in barricado,
 Most proper for the bastinado—

These he bestow'd, and look'd and smil'd ;
 Like a fond father hugg'd the child,
 And kiss'd again, admir'd and mus'd,
 And soon a trait'rous soul infus'd.
 Go creep and cringe, and fawn and fear ;
 Go stab and flatter, smile and sneer ;
 Goad in thy heart, wind in thy head,
 Be thou possess'd by me, he said !
 Go forth and rhyme, thy poison expand,
 I'll at thy elbow ready stand.

Th' Excrescence heard ! his crowd he took,
 And thrum'd, amain, from Rabelais' book !

And

And Marot's Tongs, discordant, squall'd!
 And magic girdles * quickly scrawl'd!
 Loudly proclaim'd himself a Wit,
 And old new nonsense daily writ!

His merit, soon, th' advantage gain'd
 Of being hated, hiss'd, and can'd.
 Expell'd, to hide his open shame,
 He, next, a hypocrite became:
 Last, to his fire, return'd again;
 Where, with his fire, may he remain!

But, master Satan, you're a fool
 To make a thing like this your tool!
 Would you the world enslave, deceive,
 And make men worship and believe,
 You should assume some fairer form;
 You'll best seduce when most you charm.
 Besides, the son you sent, from hell,
 Betray'd by serving you too well.

ODE ON INGRATITUDE†.

Oh thou! my glory, my support;
 Whom, fondly, Memory loves to court,
 Loves to recount thy precious stores;
 The while Ingratitude forgets
 Thy numerous gifts, her numerous debts,
 And all th' exhaustless good thy bounty pours,

* *La Ceinture Magique*, a comedy, written by Rousseau.

† The above copy is different from that found in Voltaire's own edition; there are three stanzas more in this, which he has inserted in the Life of Rousseau. This poem is rather a collection of satirical stanzas than an ode.

Oh

Oh Friendship, fairest child of heav'n !
 To whom the Gods the pow'r have giv'n
 To seize and fascinate my heart !
 Thy wond'rous impulse ties of blood,
 However dear, have ne'er withstood !
 Feeble to thee the flame such ties impart !

Who is my father ! Who but he
 Whose wisdom, whose integrity,
 Instructs my mind, my steps directs ?
 And who the black unnatural son ?
 Why he, to worse than witchcraft won,
 The wretch whom base ingratitude infects.

Monsters ! to whom stern Nature said,
 " Of vilest matter be ye made ;
 " Nor e'er my quick'ning powers know !
 " But strangers be your savage hearts
 " To all the raptures Love imparts,
 " And all the joys blest Friendship bids to flow !"

The Lion, with destructive force,
 Bathing in blood his dreadful course,
 Of Kings and Gods the symbol, he !
 The Serpent, though less dang'rous far,
 For waging vile envenom'd war
 Is held the hated type of Perfidy.

Such was that Plagiarist, of note,
 That Ape of d'Ouville and Marot,
 By his detested Libels known,
 He, like Locusta, swell'd his fame,
 As infamous in act as name ;
 Illustrious by his art of poisoning grown.

What

What horrid vice, Rousseau, declare,
Thy guilty feet could first ensnare,
Avenging Justice thus could arm !
Ingratitude thee first betray'd,
And lo ! in terror, came array'd
Legions of Sins and Crimes, thy soul to storm !

Apollo heard, in dreadful ire !
And instant snatch'd the sacred Lyre
From hands degen'rate, songs profane !
Expell'd the haunts of Man or Muse,
A Reptile doom'd ! in pois'nous dews,
Thy own disgorge, thou'lt wallow and remain !

What new strange Monster meets my eyes !
From whom, abhorrent, Nature flies !
So hideous, she may not endure !
In whose distorted features we
The whole mad Race of Zoilus see,
As obstinate, as stupid, as impure ?

'Tis Des Fontaines, the Priest, 'tis he !
From the Bicêtre just set free,
Who strains Olympian heights to gain,
And can the crazy Critic hope
He shall be strangled with a rope
Inwove with bays, stol'n from Parnassian plain ?

For life and honor he returns
Rancour and rage, with these he burns ;
Vile imitator of Rousseau :
More impudent, with much less art ;
A feebler head, a fouler heart ;
Equal in malice, but a meaner foe.

Far

Far hence, where Superstition low'rs

Amid Byzantium's pagan tow'rs,

Macarty hopes to hide his shame :

While I, with tranquil eye, behold,

His loss of honor, mine of gold ;

He stole my money, but he spar'd my name.

Not so the wretch who fears and hates,

Whom Envy enters and inflates,

Who robs me of my dear Renown :

Such theft may well my wrath provoke,

May draw, with most unpitying stroke,

The Herculean arm of Vengeance down.

Friendship forgive, that, thus, I deign

These poison'd shafts dart back again ;

And, stooping thus, my hand defile :

Forgive that, from thy rapturous heights,

Thy converse sweet, thy blest delights,

I could descend to things so very vile.

Virgil and Tasso bade their song

Melodious thunder roll along,

And up to heav'n's high portals mount ;

Then, at a swoop, descend to hell,

Where Furies, Fiends, and Tortures dwell,

And all her Monsters and her Crimes recount.

Rouffseau had hoped that his epistle to Father
Brumoy would gain the suffrages of all the Je-
suits, and that to Rollin the whole Janfenist party,
by which means he might soon return to Paris,
and

and receive his pardon. It was even said, that a person of great fortune had engaged to discharge all the fines and expences incurred by the law-suit. To insure success, he wrote an ode in praise of Cardinal Fleury, on the subject of the peace. This ode, though no ways equal to his former odes, was very well received by the minister; but very ill by the public. Indeed, this peace seemed destined, by a kind of fatality, to produce very indifferent odes, if we except one by young Saurin, the son of him who had the famous trial with Rousseau.

M. Chauvelin, at that time keeper of the seals, was very much importuned to procure the return of one who had so long suffered punishment. The Sieur Hardion, formerly preceptor to M. Dupré de St. Maur, exerted himself very much in this affair. Yet all these endeavors were fruitless; Rousseau had shut every door by an allegory, entitled, The Judgment of Pluto, in which he had represented Pluto ordering an Attorney-General to be flayed, and a seat to be covered with his skin. The application was sufficiently obvious. There is no Attorney-General who is willing to be flayed. The author had forgotten that excellent maxim that indicates, we ought not to write against those who hold the pen of proscription.

It

It was the more necessary for him to return to France, as he had no longer any asylum left at Brussels, since he had lost the favor of the Duke d'Arenberg. He resided at the house of a banker whose name was Medine; he afterwards quarrelled with this banker in a most unpardonable manner. The following letter from M. Medine, to one of his correspondents, will set this matter in a clearer light than any prolix relation.

**A LETTER from M. MEDINE,
against M. ROUSSEAU.**

Brussels, Feb. 17, 1738.

YOU will be astonished at the misfortune I have met with; I have had my bills protested, and am unable to take them up. I owe likewise some other trifling sums. In short, on Wednesday evening, I was lodged in the prison from which I now write. I hope, in a few days, to discharge all demands, and regain my liberty; but, would you believe it, that rascal, that monster Rousseau, who has eaten and drank at my expence for these six months, and whom I have frequently served in the most essential manner, has been the cause of my being arrested, and has persuaded the holder of my bills, who did not intend to distress me, to proceed in this manner. In short, this

this fiend incarnate, immediately after eating with me, drinking with me, embracing and kissing me, acted as a spy, and caused me to be seized at midnight in my own chamber. So black an action was never committed. I cannot think of it without horror. If you knew all I have done for him, and the obligations he has to me, in a word, how much he is indebted to me, you would shudder at his ingratitude. But I will be patient; our friendship, I am certain, will not be affected by this event. I shall, through life, continue what I always have been; that is, your most faithful and affectionate friend,

M E D I N E*.

This banker sometime afterwards retrieved his affairs. Rousseau endeavored to obtain a reconciliation with him, but not being able to succeed he continued an outcast from society, 'till an apoplexy, in the beginning of this present year, 1738, deprived him of the use of his limbs and his reason.

* This *Medine* was connected with M. de Voltaire, who had lent him money; we ought not therefore to believe him too readily in what he says against Rousseau. The crime of which the latter is accused would have been horrible; but an unfortunate man frequently entertains the most unjust suspicions of his best friends. However, we must confess we are totally ignorant of this affair.

Such

Such was the life and deplorable end of a man who might have been happy, had he curbed his pernicious inclinations. It is much to be wished, that young persons, who apply themselves to the study of literature, may profit by his example. It will appear, from this short history, what unhappy consequences frequently flow from a talent for writing, and we shall find reason to conclude

Qui bené latuit bené vixit.

He died at Brussels, March 17, 1741. The two following letters, as they relate to him, are here inserted.

A LETTER from the Sieur SAURIN
to Madame VOISIN.

MADAM,

THOUGH I have the misfortune not to be known at court, except by the shocking misrepresentations of my most inveterate enemy, nevertheless I have the confidence to cast myself at your feet, and solicit your justice, even though you have granted your protection to my accuser, of which he endeavors to make the most wicked use, by prejudicing my judges against me. For what may not the protection of a person of your rank, who join to the most cultivated understanding

ing the highest reputation for piety, effect against one of my low condition? What regret must you feel, Madam, should you find this protection had only been employed to oppress the innocent! Yet, I will venture to affirm, with that confidence which the testimony of a good conscience naturally inspires, you are exposed to this danger. The question is not whether Rousseau shall be justified, and escape; but whether I am to be found guilty, and ruined. I leave it, Madam, to your prudence and piety to determine how far you are sufficiently acquainted with me so as not to doubt but that I am a villain; and how far you may without scruple contribute by your influence to my destruction. We are all in the presence of God the sovereign judge, and in whose presence all human grandeur vanishes; in his presence, then, Madam, weigh what I here humbly offer. If thus enlightened you will examine by what steps, what artifices, what feigned tears you have been thus far engaged by my persecutor, I dare expect, Madam, that a heart like yours, upright, generous, noble, overflowing with benevolence and religion, will wish to repair the wrong already done me; or, at least, will induce you to withdraw your protection, in consideration of the incertitude you at present are, with respect to me. You will one day, Madam, do more;

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you

you will be provoked at having been imposed upon, and will pity the misfortunes of a philosopher and a mathematician, whose character and understanding were always far from poetical; who has been imprisoned for writing infamous verses against his dearest friends; nay, against himself; accused of being their author by the man to whom they are universally attributed; a poet by profession, satirical and licentious, whose whole reputation is founded on the most virulent libels and epigrams, worthy of the flames, and which he does not blush to own. Such, Madam, and notoriously so, my accuser is. The respect I bear the consideration in which you hold him, and which he has surprized you into, will not permit me to say more. I am, Madam, with every sentiment of profound veneration,

Yours, &c.

Dated at the Chatelet,

Oct. 8, 1710.

A L E T-

A LETTER from M. DE MOLIN* to the Authors of the Bibliotheque Francoise.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE just read the ninth article of your Journal for the year 1736, vol. XXIII, 1st part, page 133. I do not know whether M. de Voltaire, who has been long in the country, and is very ill, has seen it. I imagine not. But, Gentlemen, justice and gratitude oblige me to write in his defence, till he is sufficiently recovered, to vindicate himself; and since you have published the accusations of Rousseau, it is but just that you should admit a reply.

The writer of the letter you have published, who furnished you with that of Rousseau, conceals his name. His reason is manifest. He is a slanderer. I avow my name, because I assert nothing but the truth. I am unacquainted with the

* Molin was a corn merchant in Paris, who was connected with M. de Voltaire. He met with misfortunes in trade, and M. de Voltaire lost 20,000 livres (300 pounds) by him; but, considering him as rather unfortunate than culpable, forgave him at the solicitation of M. d'Argental and the Abbé Mouffinot. Some persons of learning, who have read this letter of Molin, have imagined they could discover in it the style of the poet, his friend.

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ground of the quarrel between the author of the *Henriade*, Charles XII, *Alzire*, *Brutus*, &c. and the author of certain odes, allegories, and epigrams. I could wish that all the learned were friends. I do not mean here to attack the *Sieur Rousseau*, but I think it may be proper to point out the difference between these two men, that the public may be the better able to judge.

Monfieur de Voltaire is of a very good family. He possesses property, and has relinquished places he might have possessed, to apply himself entirely to the *Belles Lettres*. He has never employed his fortune but to the best purposes. I can testify that he has given up the profits of his works to his friends; and the *Sieur Ledet*, by whom they are printed, and who has announced a new and magnificent edition, may declare whether *M. de Voltaire* has ever required from him the least gratuity. I can likewise bear witness, in the face of the world, that he has for a long time maintained and paid a certain salary to two young persons, who cultivate the *Belles Lettres*. One of these breathed his last in my arms: his name was *Le Fevre*; and his relations, who are now in Paris, cannot dispute the fact.

I never knew him refuse any thing to the application of any man of letters, in indigence, when his fortune was in a better condition than it

is

is at present. He has lately lost considerable sums, which losses have indeed no otherways affected him but as they have deprived him of the means of continuing his benefactions.

He has presented to the French comedians, who acted *Alzire*, the profits arising from that piece. Besides which, he has never paid his court to any one. I have known him visited by the greatest persons in the kingdom, and, what will appear more surprising, consulted by them concerning their affairs. I have been witness of his negotiating the marriage of a Princess, and of the essential services he has rendered the family.

Such is the character he bears among all to whom he is known. His company has always been greatly esteemed, as he is possessed of the most engaging politeness and the most dignified manners. I know not wherefore the *Sieur Rousseau* has said, that he has a disagreeable countenance, since, on the contrary, in his youth, his person was very pleasing.

With respect to his writings, they are known to all the world. There have been twenty editions of the *Henriade*. His *History of Charles XII*, *Brutus*, and *Zaire*, have been translated into Italian, English, and German; and there is no doubt to be entertained, but he is equally esteemed in

his own country, notwithstanding some would wish to have us believe he is there despised.

You have been told his letters were burnt, but I can assure you they were not his, and I have the manuscript still by me, which is not any ways similar to the work attributed to M. de Voltaire.

You cannot but perceive, Gentlemen, that his successes have procured him many enemies ; but you likewise know, that the public seldom regard authors in their own cause. I discover much rudeness and virulence in Rousseau's letter, but not the least shadow of truth. The jealousy of the poet, which mingles personal abuse with frivolous criticism, is sufficiently conspicuous. He reproaches the elegant author of *Alzire*, for having made *amour* rhyme with *amour*.

This mistake has crept into some copies of the Paris edition, which I conducted ; the true reading is,

*Tu t'assures ma foi, mon respect, mon retour,
Tous mes vœux, s'il en est qui tiennent lieu d'amour.*

Thou hast insured my faith, respect, and vows,
If vows cou'd e'er supply the place of love.

The printer had put *mon amour* instead of *retour*. I reprimanded him for his carelessness, and requested the *Sieur Ledet* to correct the error. It is in page 57 of the Paris edition, act iv. You may

may judge, by this unfair quotation, of the spirit which actuates M. Rousseau. I can assure you, that whatever he has advanced against the moral character of M. de Voltaire is equally groundless. If you would take the trouble to read over again the admirable factum of M. Saurin against Rousseau, you would see, that he himself has been accused of all the enormities he now so unjustly imputes to M. de Voltaire. But the real character of both is well known, and it would be very unjust to permit one who has been disgraced by the law, to cast that disgrace on another. I rely on your justice to publish this letter, since it contains nothing but the truth.

I have the honor to be,

Gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant,

DE MOLIN.

Paris, Aug. 26, 1736.

HAVING given this History of M. DE VOLTAIRE'S Quarrel with M. ROUSSEAU, we must next relate the violent Contest he had with the ABBE DES FONTAINES.

THESE two writers were at first in the closest connexion. The Abbé des Fontaines always spoke of M. de Voltaire with enthusiasm. A criticism,

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though a mild and impartial one, on his tragedy of the Death of Cæsar, and a little pleasantry on his Temple of Taste, were magnified by M. de Voltaire into horrible instances of the blackest ingratitude : but, having complained to the Abbé des Fontaines, in a private letter, both of the criticism and the pleasantry, he received all the satisfaction he could wish. With this he seemed perfectly contented, and wrote to the Abbé, in 1735, in the most affectionate terms. However, a fortnight after the date of this letter of amity and reconciliation, he attacked him in the *Mercur*. He was asked the reason of this sudden change, but he returned no answer, except by a number of epigrams, which he circulated against the Abbé.

After having insulted him in verse, he published, in 1738, a piece in prose, entitled the *Preservative*, in which was this unfeeling letter :

“ I had no acquaintance with the Abbé Guyot
 “ des Fontaines till M. Thiriot introduced him to
 “ me, in 1724, as a person who had formerly been
 “ a Jesuit, and by consequence a man of letters ; I
 “ received him in a friendly manner, as I receive all
 “ those who cultivate literature ; but, about a fort-
 “ night after, was astonished by the reception of
 “ a letter, dated from the *Bicêtre*, in which he was
 “ then confined. I learned, that, three months be-
 “ fore,

fore, he had been in the Chatelet for the same
 offence, and that a regular prosecution was com-
 menced. I was then fortunate enough to pos-
 sels several powerful friends, of whom I have
 since been deprived by death : I made all
 possible haste to Fontainebleau, sick as I was, and,
 by pressing solicitations, obtained his enlargement
 and the discontinuation of a prosecution in which
 his life was at stake. I also obtained permission
 for him to go into the country with M. Thiriot,
 to visit my friend, the President de Berniere. In
 what manner would you suppose he employed
 himself while there? In writing a libel against me.
 He even shewed it to M. Thiriot, who obliged
 him to throw it into the fire ; he begged my par-
 don, telling me, it had been written some time
 before he was in the *Bicêtre*. I had the weakness
 to forgive him, and this weakness has gained me
 a mortal enemy, who has written anonymous let-
 ters to me, and sent a score of libels against me
 into Holland. These, Sir, are a few of the things
 I have to alledge against him, &c."

That the Abbé des Fontaines was confined in
 the *Bicêtre*, in 1725, is very true, He was then
 concerned in the *Journal des Scavans*, but the learn-
 ed world knows, that this was merely an atrocious
 contrivance of his enemies, to effect his ruin. M.
 de Voltaire has shewn the falsity and absurdity of
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the accusation, in a Memoir written by himself. He wrote it at the request of the President de Berniere, who was related to the Abbé des Fontaines. After a fortnight's disgrace, the Abbé des Fontaines was restored to society and his literary occupations.

The Magistrate of the Police, sorry to find he had been imposed upon and made the instrument of so mean a revenge, justified the Abbé himself, not only to those with whom he was immediately connected, but also by a letter, which he wrote to the Abbé Bignon, who then had the principal management of the Journal des Scavans. This letter was publicly read, in an assembly of all those concerned in the Journal, and, consequently, the Abbé des Fontaines was immediately re-instated in his employment, by the Abbé Bignon.

The first step taken by the Abbé des Fontaines, was, to write to M. de Voltaire. " I shall never forget (says he) the infinite obligations I have to you. The goodness of your heart is superior even to your understanding ; never was there a more generous friend. How infinitely am I your debtor ? To prove my gratitude ought to be the employment of my life. The Abbé Nadal, the Abbé de Pons, Danchet, Ferret, may triumph, may treat me as I shall always treat their despicable writings. &c. &c."

It

It would have become a grateful mind never to have lost sight of a service so essential, though it was unworthy M. de Voltaire to proclaim it on every occasion. By continually renewing the remembrance of so disagreeable an event, he could not but draw on himself all the indignation of the Abbé des Fontaines, who, in the first heat of his resentment, brought forth the *Voltairemania*, a virulent satire, in which the Journalist reproaches his adversary with every kind of literary imposture, meanness, theft, extravagant insolence, and with having deservedly suffered the most mortifying humiliation, while he manifested, on every occasion, equal pride, ignorance and a tendency to impiety, which nothing, however sacred, could escape. These personalities were odious; they might debase his enemy, but could not justify the Abbé des Fontaines.

This libel was ill written and entirely unworthy the pen of so formidable a critic: he therefore formally disclaimed it, in a deposition before a magistrate; in which he says, "I hereby declare I am not the author of a libel, entitled *Voltairemania*. I totally disavow it, and regard it as most groundless and calumnious, with respect to the pretended facts which it imputes to M. de Voltaire, and I should think myself dishonored had I had the least concern in its composition, as I possess

“ I possess all those sentiments of esteem due to his talents, and for which he is so justly honored by the public.”

Rousseau, who was attacked in the *Preservative*, took part in this quarrel. He wrote epigrams to the end of his life, in which he was imitated by the Abbé des Fontaines, who never ceased to attack M. de Voltaire, though he concealed his censures under an appearance of praise, ingeniously equivocal. This Journalist was certainly a severe critic; he not only attacked the author of the *Henriade*, but a multitude of other writers, by whom he had never been offended.

When the Abbé Prevot published his translation of the Familiar Epistles of Cicero, he made a present of a copy to the Abbé des Fontaines, who wrote back in answer, “ I entertain a high opinion of your work, and shall insert a proper extract from it. You must pardon me if I make a few critical remarks : Algiers would be famished, were Algiers at peace with all the world.”—Such principles could not but disgust all worthy men; he was therefore far from being generally esteemed.

This Abbé endeavoring to justify himself before a magistrate, who entertained no very good opinion of him, the magistrate replied, “ Should we regard what is alledged by all who are accused, none would be found guilty.” And should we regard,

gard, answered the Abbé, what is alledged by all accusers, none would be found innocent."

On another occasion, however, he found a happy retort more difficult. A person, high in office, reproached him for being the author of so many satirical and abusive writings. "My Lord, said the Abbé, I must live." "I do not see the necessity of that," replied the minister coldly. This answer would admit of no repartee.

These instances sufficiently prove, there were people who did not think favorably of the Abbé des Fontaines. He had made himself many implacable enemies ; and this must ever be the lot of those whose daily business it is to attack vanity and wound self-love.

We shall now speak of the Steps taken by M. de VOLTAIRE, to procure Admission into the French Academy, and of the Satires and Lawsuit occasioned by that Admission.

THE Philosophical Letters, published in 1734, were the beginning of the troubles which M. de Voltaire experienced, from the extreme liberty with which he thought and wrote. Being regarded by government as a dangerous man, and a warrant having been granted to apprehend him, by the Parliament of Paris, he pretended to retire into

into England, but concealed himself at Cirei, an estate of the Marchioness du Chatelet, in Champagne, where he did not remain quiet long.

Le Mondaine, a satire, containing indecent allusions to the principal personages of the Old Testament, was published in 1736.

The Abbé des Fontaines took care to shew this pleasantry to a priest, named C—, who had considerable interest over Cardinal de Fleuri. The work was condemned as infamous, and the author obliged to fly his country. He would have been infallibly arrested, if Madame du Chatelet had not concealed him from his pursuers. The King of Prussia offered him the same asylum he afterwards accepted; but, at that time, he chose rather to go to Holland till the storm was dispersed. His friends appeased the minister, and he returned to France.

Amid all his most involuntary peregrinations, M. de Voltaire never entirely abandoned the hope of living quietly in France, at least it is to be presumed so, from the project he had formed of being admitted into the French academy, and thus procuring himself an honorable retreat.

Merope, which received the loudest applauses of any of his works, was, as it were, the pledge of his reconciliation with the public, and the promise of future tranquillity. This tragedy was performed, February 26, 1743. The author had
feldom

feldom been a fpectator of the fuccefs of his pieces, but was determined, this time, to gather the fruits of his genius, and, by going from box to box, fhew himfelf to the houfe. As foon as he appeared the applaufe was redoubled, and he was proclaimed Academician by the public, who thus, as he had hoped, forwarded his views.

An imagination accuftomed to heat itfelf, in fo flattering a moment, muft be incapable of reflection. The stratagem had fucceeded. M. de Voltaire imagined, the enthufiafm of the pit had given him a right to folicit the Academicians. He paid his vifits, and was refufed. Not but that many members of the academy acknowledged his right to a feat; but M. Boyer, Bifhop of Mirepoix, caufed him to be rejected; either out of zeal for religion, or to make room for a prelate, who was his friend.

The difagreeable circumftances which followed this ftep of M. de Voltaire's, would have extinguifhed fuch a defire in any other man, who had fo little occafion for academic diftinctions, but he was not eafily repulfed. A place becoming vacant, three years afterwards, he made a new effort to break thofe barriers he had hitherto been unable to pafs.

He no doubt reflected on what had occafioned his being repulfed before. It is well known he
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sent a letter to Father de la Tour, principal of the college of Louis le Grand, which was an actual confession of faith. He retracted those works which had been the joint produce of impiety and madness, combated the opinions of the author of the *Nouvelles Ecclesiastiques*, and presented himself, fortified with favorable attestations.

The academy forgot the past, hoped better things for the future, and received the profelyte in 1746. Was any thing more necessary to make M. de Voltaire despise the impotent malice of those who were determined to censure the choice of the academy? He might well condemn the folly of the poet Piron; who, on the day when M. de Voltaire pronounced his discourse, not being able to make his way through the numerous auditors, said, "I find it is much easier to be admitted a member here than to get in." This was unjust; M. de Voltaire, to whom it was told, paid no regard to it. But he did not manifest the same indifference for the satirical pieces which appeared on this occasion.

Of all the productions against M. de Voltaire, to which the jealousy excited by his new dignity gave birth, there were two which irritated him more than any of the rest. One was entitled, A Discourse, pronounced at the door of the academy, to M. de Voltaire, by the Director; and the other, The Poetical Triumph.

umph. These were both printed on the same sheet, and circulated all over Paris.

Voltaire determined to proportion his vengeance by the effect produced on his imagination, and applied to the Lieutenant of the Police for an order to arrest the author of these two pieces, and those who had been concerned in their sale. The necessity of stopping the progress of defamation, which attacked the academy itself, and of repressing, by a severe example, the licentiousness of those numerous detractors, who seemed every day to grow bolder by impunity, and to inundate Paris with libels, were the motives M. de Voltaire enlarged on before the magistrate, to hasten the grant of the order he solicited, and which could not well be refused him, it being impossible to foresee the use he should make of this delegated power.

Having procured what was so necessary to the execution of his design, M. de Voltaire, the man who had so often drawn tears from crowded theatres, and who, by the universal pity he inspired, seemed to have written the history of his own heart, became in an instant the reverse of himself. Entirely given up to the impulse of passion, the fury of which he had so often combated, he thought of nothing but finding some culprit

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on whom all the weight of justice or of vengeance might fall.

M. de Voltaire, having been informed, by a hawker, that Travenol, the son, violin player at the opera, had been concerned in the sale of the two fatires in question, determined to have him seized. He employed an Exempt of the Police in this business, to whom he delivered his writ. The house of Travenol, the father, was immediately beset by a crowd of archers. They endeavored, to no purpose, to seize the son; he was absent. Despairing therefore to accomplish their purpose, they determined to inflict, on the father, the punishment intended for the son. Neither the age of Travenol, his infirmities, nor his innocence itself could defend him from these men, who were the ministers of the resentment of M. de Voltaire.

In vain did he urge the rights of a citizen, in vain did he plead that guilt ought to be personal, and that the father ought not to suffer for crimes of which the son was accused. He was not heard. Insensible to his tears, they dragged him from his home, in a merciless manner; and this old man, having no protection but his irreproachable virtue, saw himself led, like a felon, through the midst of an insulting rabble, always greedy of such exhibitions, to the prison of *Fort l'Evêque*, where he was secretly confined.

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The imprisonment of Travenol was so violent and irregular, that this unfortunate old man, destitute as he was of support or acquaintance with the Great, yet, found those who remonstrated in his behalf to the Lieutenant of the Police, and solicited his release. In short, some generous persons, the friends of humanity, strongly represented to that magistrate how much his order had been abused, and excited his compassion by describing the manner in which the unfortunate Travenol was torn from his family, and dragged to prison like a criminal. Their solicitations were not disregarded. The Lieutenant of the Police enquired concerning the truth of what he was told, and the old man regained his liberty, after having been closely confined five or six days.

An outrage so atrocious, committed on the person of a citizen, under the very eyes of justice, exposed M. de Voltaire to claims and consequences proportionate to the violence of the injury.

Travenol, now at liberty, might reasonably hope justice would take place, as his cause was connected with that of the Lieutenant of the Police, who was also interested to punish the abuse that had been made of his authority.

But a much more important object engaged the attention of Travenol: for, informed, on his leaving prison, that his son, who had been accused

by M. de Voltaire of having facilitated the sale of the satires, was still hotly pursued, he determined to sacrifice resentment to his son's preservation. He therefore immediately repaired to M. de Voltaire, clasped the knees of the man from whom he had a right to insist on a reparation, and requested him to pardon his son, whose whole crime was having involuntarily incurred his displeasure.

M. de Voltaire was softened, embraced, wept over, and dismissed him, with assurances that he would protect and serve both him and his son.

After these positive promises, Travenol thought it inconsistent with his reconciliation to insist on any amends for the injury he had sustained from M. de Voltaire. He considered what had passed between them as a kind of amnesty, in which he abandoned his right to any recompense for the wrongs he had received; while Voltaire, on his part, engaged to stop the prosecution against his son, for the pretended crime with which he was charged. The conditions of this treaty were certainly very unequal, since Travenol remitted a real injury to M. Voltaire, who, in return, only pardoned an imaginary offence; but Travenol considered it as an important advantage to extricate his son from his embarrassment. Strange, however, as it may appear, M. de Voltaire, in contempt of

of his engagement, continued to persecute the younger Travenol with more heat than ever. The father, consequently, looked on himself as no longer bound by a treaty which could only remain valid while it was equally observed by both parties. Restored to his rights by these new acts of hostility, he held it his duty to put them in force.

On November 19, 1746, he therefore petitioned the court to be admitted a party in the suit pending between his son and M. de Voltaire, and concluded by declaring, it was at the instigation of the latter that he had been arrested and imprisoned five days in Fort l'Evêque, by virtue of a pretended order from the Lieutenant of the Police. He laid his damages at 6000 livres, (250 pounds) besides costs of suit.

M. de Voltaire was condemned to pay, not 6000 livres, as had been demanded, but five hundred. What, however, was the most aggravating to him was, that several of the counsellors diverted their hearers at his expence. M. Man-nori did not content himself with merely refuting the arguments in behalf of M. de Voltaire : he published his pleadings, which were sold in every coffee-house. In these were contained the satirical lines that had occasioned the proceedings, and which, though, before, only circulated by stealth, were now openly read by all Paris. This lawsuit may

afford an excellent lesson for those literati who have too great a share of sensibility, and it is principally to warn them against resenting every little injury that we have given so minute an account of this dispute.

It is probable M. de Voltaire gained a seat in the academy so late (where he should have been received at first, if regard were had only to abilities) principally because they dreaded the impetuosity of his temper. This was what Fontenelle told him, on his having a dispute, a short time after his admission, with M. Danchet, a learned and respectable man. This Academician having maintained a contrary opinion to M. de Voltaire, was treated by the latter with considerable rudeness. M. de Fontenelle, offended at such behavior, could not refrain from saying, "M. de Voltaire, you perfectly justify the repugnance we have always felt to admit you among us."

But things were greatly changed when he returned to Paris in 1778. The academy received him as the father of literature, and he held the sceptre at every meeting. They loaded him with compliments and caresses, which, for many reasons, were certainly his due; for, independant of the various works with which he has enriched the theatre, and the republic of letters, there are, in his Commentaries on Corneille, and in his Miscellanies,

collanies, some excellent observations on the French language. He proposed to have the Academy's Dictionary re-written, and found his own faculties sufficiently vigorous to undertake the letter A, which is the most extensive. He intended to have added, to that work, the true etymology of every word, its power, its different significations, literal and figurative: as also the strength or weakness of the correspondent term in other languages; to have quoted authorities for the use of it from the best authors, to have shewn the extent allotted to it by them, and have pointed out whether it was most proper for poetry or for prose.

It is much to be lamented, a project so useful should not have been put in execution, and that we have still only imperfect dictionaries of a language which is in use, or at least known, from the Straights of Gibraltar to the farthest extremities of Russia.

M. de Voltaire at length grew dissatisfied with France; the success of his tragedy of Orestes had been very equivocal; the number of his critics and his enemies daily increased; death had deprived him of a Lady who was at once his consolation and his glory, the Marchioness du Chatelet; and the King of Prussia had long invited him to his court. About the year 1750, that monarch renewed his solicitations, and at length prevailed

on M. de Voltaire to fix his residence at Berlin, with a pension of 20,000 livres (800 pounds a year) and the title of Chamberlain. The poet was at first received with marks of the greatest favor. The King of Prussia treated him as an intimate friend; but the more that Prince lavished his kindness on him, the more the author assumed an air of familiarity, which, though it may be excused in private, never fails to give offence in public. This was the first cause of the disgrace of M. de Voltaire.

The second was his quarrel with M. de Maupertuis. These two celebrated men were at first the warmest of friends; M. de Maupertuis wrote to several with whom he corresponded: "Voltaire is a wonderful man; his most admirable productions cost him less trouble than the indifferent works of other writers."

M. de Voltaire was the disciple of M. de Maupertuis in the Newtonian philosophy, and has praised his master with the highest enthusiasm. There are letters of his, still extant, in which he writes in the style of a man who acknowledges his inferiority.

"I have just read, (says he in a letter to M. de Maupertuis, dated May 22, 1738) your history, and tract on natural philosophy, which are preferable to all the romances that ever were written,

“ written. Madame du Chatelet intends to read
 “ them ; she is more worthy of that honor than I
 “ am. However, while she has the pleasure of
 “ receiving instruction, I shall, at least, have that
 “ of returning thanks.

“ Your preface appears to me extremely inge-
 “ nious, since it inspires the reader with respect for
 “ the importance of the enterprize, and interests
 “ navigators, who otherwise concern themselves
 “ but little about the figure of the earth. It pru-
 “ dently insinuates the erroneoufness of former ad-
 “ measurements, and the accuracy of yours, and
 “ renders us impatient to follow you into Lapland.

“ No sooner have you conducted the reader
 “ thither, than he imagines himself in an enchant-
 “ ed country, where philosophers are the fairies.

“ The Argonauts who made a trading voyage
 “ into the Crimea, and who have been extolled into
 “ demi-gods, by boasting Greece, were not to be
 “ compared, I will not say with the Clairaults, the
 “ Camufes and the Monniers, but, even with the
 “ draughtsmen who accompanied you. If these
 “ have been deified, what ought to be your reward?
 “ I will tell you. The esteem of all the learned,
 “ which will insure you that of posterity. Be-
 “ lieve me, the approbation of a few rational
 “ persons, in the eighteenth century, is much
 “ more honorable than a Grecian apotheosis.

Awfully

“ Awfully transported with you, I traverse de-
 “ serts of snow, and climb mountains of ice. You
 “ certainly excel in description, and, if you pleased,
 “ would be one of our greatest poets, as you are
 “ our most accurate mathematician. If your cal-
 “ culations resemble those of Archimedes, and your
 “ courage that of Christopher Columbus, your
 “ picture of the snows of Tornea has the stroke of
 “ Michael Angelo, and that of the different species
 “ of the Aurora Borealis discovers the hand of
 “ Albani.

“ We have just learnt, from your letter, that
 “ your success does not keep you at Paris, but that
 “ your sensibility has induced you to set out for
 “ St. Malo. Whence is it that you possess both
 “ a sublime understanding and a feeling heart ?

“ I am informed a new edition of my wretched
 “ work is preparing for the press.—I have already
 “ corrected the mistakes of the editor concerning
 “ light; but if you would bestow an hour or two
 “ in correcting my errors, in that and other parti-
 “ culars, you would render me a service never to
 “ be forgotten. I have so little time that I know
 “ not what to do first. The avidity of my book-
 “ sellers is like a furious torrent, and I must en-
 “ treat your assistance, that it may not hurry me
 “ away. The most respectable woman in Europe,
 “ and she, perhaps, who is alone deserving your
 “ company, adds her intreaties to mine.

“ It

“ It will not be much loss of time, nor can it
 “ indeed be losing time, to instruct your disciples;
 “ Adieu; my heart assures me, my love and ad-
 “ miration of you will end but with my life.”

M. de Maupertuis received several letters full of like flattery. M. de Voltaire was, for awhile, his friend; but, as he was his rival in literary reputation and the favor of his master, this good understanding did not last long. The quarrel had been predicted as soon as Voltaire set out from Paris, and the prediction was justified by the event.

The author of the *Henriade* took part in the dispute which happened in 1752, concerning the least quantity of action. M. de Maupertuis founded on it his demonstration of the existence of God. M. Koenig, professor at Leyden, and an excellent mathematician, pretended that the principle of this demonstration was to be found in the fragment of a letter by the learned Leibnitz. M. de Maupertuis required him to produce that letter, which was never done. The Academy of Berlin therefore declared this pretended passage, cited by Koenig, was undeserving of credit.

This declaration served but to increase the contest, which was dishonorable to both parties. The partizans of M. de Maupertuis maintained, that his proceedings, with respect to Koenig, were not blameable

blameable, since his assertions were just, and he had a right to defend the thought as his own. His enemies, on the contrary, declared so much vehemence unbecoming so trifling a dispute; that Koenig was a learned man, and a man of veracity, whose whole crime was, his having offended the vanity of M. de Maupertuis, and all his misfortune, that of not having the original letter he had quoted in his possession. Posterity may decide on the merits of this quarrel, but that each of the disputants thought himself perfectly justifiable is certain.

M. de Voltaire engaged in this contest, and began by writing his 'Answer from an Academician of Berlin to an Academician of Paris,' which was filed an infamous libel by an august member of the academy. It was immediately followed by another pamphlet, still more virulent, consisting of three distinct satirical pieces, in which there was no want of wit.

The title of the first was, "The Diatriba of Doctor Akakia, physician to the Pope." The second, "The Decree of the Inquisition." And the third, "The Judgment of the Professors of the College of Wisdom." Through these there are perpetual allusions to the writings of Maupertuis; a continued strain of irony and personality, and the most unfeeling sarcasms. Though it was far from
being

being destitute of wit, it was nevertheless treated as a defamatory libel, and burnt by the common executioner in all the public places in Berlin, December 24, 1752.

The King of Prussia, enraged to see the president of his academy attacked with such asperity, accused M. de Voltaire with being the author of the *Akakia*. Accustomed to disclaim his works, he protested, on his honor, that he had no hand in that satire; but the King confuted him, by producing the manuscript of his secretary, which he had ordered to be seized at the printer's.

From that moment M. de Voltaire perceived himself ruined at the court of Berlin. He returned the King his ensign of the order of merit, and his chamberlain's key, with the following verses :

These gifts with affection I wore ;
 With anguish these gifts I restore :
 And thus, while his bosom with jealousy burns,
 A lover his mistress's portrait returns.

The King, touched with this act of submission, two hours after, sent him back the tokens of his former kindness, and granted him a long conference, in which the poet, if he could not justify, at least, excused himself.

Voltaire after this obtained another audience of the King, in which he requested permission to go
 to

to Plombieres for the benefit of the waters. His Majesty granted his consent, and made him promise to return. Voltaire's enemies, however, continued to circulate reports that might prejudice him in the opinion of that Prince. Maupertuis told the King, that he called the revision of his works, *washing his foul linen*. It was also insinuated, to Frederic, that as soon as the French poet should be out of his dominions, he would revenge himself by criticising his writings.

The King of Prussia, prevailed on by these representations, wrote him the following letter, so often printed, and which we give here only to prove how much that Monarch had been incensed against his favorite.

“ You are at liberty to leave my service whenever
 “ you please; but, before you go, let me request
 “ you to return the contract of your engagement,
 “ the key, the cross, and the volume of poetry with
 “ which I entrusted you. I could wish my works
 “ had only been exposed to the critical observations
 “ of you and Koenig. I cannot regard the censures
 “ of those who imagine they raise their own reputation by ruining that of others. I have neither the
 “ madness nor vanity of certain authors. I look on
 “ the cabals of men of letters as the disgrace of literature, but do not the less esteem those who cultivate
 “ tivate

“ tivate learning with more liberal minds. My
 “ contempt only falls on the leaders of parties.”

March 16, 1753.

M. de Voltaire left Prussia after having received this mortifying letter ; he went from Berlin to Leipfick, and from Leipfick to Gotha, where he met with the most flattering reception from the Duke and Dutcheſs. After paſſing a month at this court, he went to that of the Landgrave of Heſſe Caſſel, who received him in the ſame favorable manner.

At length he ſet out for Francfort, where he was arreſted by the magiſtrates at the deſire of the Pruffian reſident. He was obliged to pledge his honor, and give a written promiſe not to abſent himſelf without permiſſion or ſatiſfying the demands that had been made. Notwithſtanding this engagement, they were informed, much to their ſurprize, that he had ſuddenly left the place. He was immediately purſued, and brought back to the city under a guard of ten ſoldiers. The reaſon he gave for his departure was, that he intended to try the waters of Viſbaden.

The King of Prussia's motive for cauſing him to be arreſted, was to prevent his making an improper uſe of the volume of poetry he had in his poſſeſſion. On this occaſion M. de Voltaire made the following declaration, printed in the gazettes :

“ I am

“ I am dying. I protest before God and men,
 “ that, though I am no longer in the service of his
 “ Prussian Majesty, I am not the less attached to
 “ that Monarch, nor less submissive to his com-
 “ mands for the short time I have to live. He
 “ has arrested me at Francfort for a volume of
 “ poetry, of which he had made me a present.
 “ I shall remain in prison without complaining,
 “ until the book be brought back from Ham-
 “ bourg, where I have left it.

“ I have given up, to the resident of his Prussian
 “ Majesty at Francfort, all the letters I had re-
 “ ceived from his master, and which I preserved
 “ as the dear marks of the kindness with which I
 “ had been honored.

“ He also required me to restore the agreement
 “ which he had been pleased to make with me, I
 “ am certainly willing to give it up, as well as
 “ any thing else, as soon as it can be found. This
 “ writing was not, properly speaking, a contract,
 “ but merely an effect of the King’s goodness, of
 “ no consequence in itself, as it only contained
 “ my thanks for the pension which his Prussian
 “ Majesty had been pleased to bestow upon me,
 “ with the permission of the King, my master ;
 “ as also for that which he had granted to my
 “ niece after my death, as well as for the cross,
 “ and the key of chamberlain.

“ The

“ The King of Prussia had condescended to
 “ write, at the bottom of this little instrument, as
 “ nearly as I can remember, *I sign this agree-*
 “ *ment with the utmost satisfaction, which I have*
 “ *wished to enter into these fifteen years.* This
 “ writing, which is absolutely useless to his Ma-
 “ jesty, myself and the public, shall certainly be
 “ returned, as soon as it can be found among my
 “ other papers. I declare myself guilty of treason
 “ towards the King of France, my master, and
 “ the King of Prussia, if I do not restore it the
 “ moment I find it.

“ My niece, who attends me during my illness,
 “ engages, in the same solemn manner, to return
 “ it, if it should be found by her.”

Madame Denis, niece to M. de Voltaire, was
 arrested with him ; and this stroke was most sensibly
 felt by her uncle. “ I imagine,” said he, in one
 of his letters to her, some time after, “ that all
 “ this is a dream, or that it happened in the time
 “ of Dionysius of Syracuse. I ask myself, whe-
 “ ther it can possibly be true, that a French lady,
 “ travelling with the passport of the King, should
 “ have been dragged through the streets of Franc-
 “ fort, by soldiers, and thrown into prison, without
 “ any form of law, or without her servant being per-
 “ mitted to attend her, while four soldiers, with
 “ their bayonets fixed, kept guard at the door, and

M

“ one

“ one Freytag, a clerk, the vilest of rascals, passed
 “ the night in her chamber ? When La Brinvilliers
 “ was arrested, the executioner was never left alone
 “ with her. There is no example extant of such in-
 “ decent barbarity. And what was your crime ?
 “ That you had made a journey of two hundred
 “ leagues, to accompany a dying uncle, whom you
 “ consider as your father, to the waters of Plom-
 “ bieres. It is indeed to be lamented, that the King
 “ of Prussia should never have atoned for such an in-
 “ jury, committed in his name, by one who stiled
 “ himself his resident.

“ With respect to myself, he had caused me to be
 “ arrested for having in my possession a printed vo-
 “ lume of his poetry, of which he had made me a
 “ present, and to which I had some kind of right.
 “ He had bestowed it on me as a pledge of his
 “ goodness, and the reward of my care. He has
 “ wished to receive back his present ; he had only
 “ to speak the word. It was not worth while to im-
 “ prison an old man, who was going to take the be-
 “ nefit of the waters.

“ He might have remembered, that, for more
 “ than 17 years, he had honored me with the most
 “ flattering marks of his esteem, and induced me,
 “ in my old age, to leave my country ; that I had
 “ labored two successive years for his improve-
 “ ment ; that I have faithfully served him, and ac-

“ ver

“ ver any way been deficient in my duty; that, in
 “ short, it is much beneath his rank and his glory to
 “ take part in an academical quarrel, and to con-
 “ clude his favors by sending soldiers to demand
 “ back his poetry. I hope he will sometime dis-
 “ cover, that he has gone too far, and been de-
 “ ceived by my enemies, and that neither the au-
 “ thor nor the King ought to have rendered the
 “ close of my life so wretched.

“ He has listened only to passion; he will one
 “ day listen to reason and benevolence.”

In 1757 this prediction was actually fulfilled. The Margraves of Bareith, who greatly esteemed M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis, was the means of renewing the literary correspondence between the Hero of Brandenburg, her brother, and the French poet. That Prince wrote to him several times to invite him again into his dominions, but Voltaire always replied, “ I can neither live with
 “ you nor without you.”

M. de Voltaire, on leaving Berlin, in 1753, stopped for some time at Leipzig, where he amused himself with continuing to ridicule M. de Mau-
 pertuis. The latter, much hurt at his satire, wrote him word he was determined to take the most ample revenge. M. de Voltaire made no other reply, but that of publishing a continuation to his *Dictionnaire*, which is not to be found in the

last editions of this piece. It may, therefore, not be improper to insert it here, as it contains several curious particulars.

“ He says, that the native of St. Maloes, (Mau-
 “ pertuis) having been again attacked by his
 “ frenzy, had vented his ravings against his good
 “ physician, Akakia, who was then ill at the city of
 “ Leipzic in Germany, and had written him a
 “ menacing letter, in which he threatened to
 “ come and murder him.

“ Since the days of M. de Pourceaugnac, who
 “ wanted to visit his physician sword in hand, so
 “ malicious a patient was never known. Doctor
 “ Akakia, being alarmed, presented the following
 “ Petition to the University of Leipzic.

‘ The Petition of Dr. AKAKIA.

‘ DOCTOR AKAKIA having fled for protection
 ‘ to the university of Leipzic, where he has sought
 ‘ an asylum from the attempts of a Laplander, a
 ‘ native of St. Maloes, who has declared he will
 ‘ murder him, in the midst of the university, earnestly
 ‘ intreats the doctors and scholars to arm themselves
 ‘ against that barbarian with their penknives and
 ‘ ink-stands; and particularly requests his brethren,
 ‘ the physicians, to administer a purge to the said
 ‘ savage, the moment he appears, in order that he
 ‘ may

‘ may evacuate all his peccant humors, and that
 ‘ they may preserve, by their art, the little rea-
 ‘ son still possessed by this cruel Laplander, and
 ‘ the life of their good brother Akakia, who re-
 ‘ commends himself to their protection. He like-
 ‘ wise entreats the apothecaries not to forget
 ‘ themselves on this occasion.’

“ In consequence of this petition, the university.
 “ issued a decree to arrest the native of St. Ma-
 “ loes, at the gates of the city, as soon as he
 “ should arrive to perpetrate his parricide on the
 “ good Akakia, who had behaved to him like a
 “ father. The following is the order of the uni-
 “ versity, and is still to be seen in the *Acta Eru-*
 “ *ditorum*.

“ A *Quidam* having written a letter to an inha-
 “ bitant of Leipfic; in which he threatens to mur-
 “ der the said inhabitant; and as the murdering
 “ of any person is manifestly contrary to the pri-
 “ vileges of the fair; this is to request all and every
 “ one to give information against the said *Quidam*,
 “ the moment he shall present himself at the gates
 “ of Leipfic. He is a philosopher, whose gait is
 “ in the compound ratio of absent and precipitate;
 “ his eyes are round and small, his peruke the same,
 “ his nose crushed flat, he has an ill look, a full
 “ face, and a full head; that is to say, full of
 “ himself; he always carries a scalpel in his
 M 3 “ pocket

“ pocket to dissect tall people. Whoever will
 “ give information, concerning him, shall receive
 “ a thousand ducats reward, to be paid at the
 “ Latin City, building by the said *Quidam*, or out
 “ of the comet of gold and diamonds which is
 “ soon to fall on the earth, according to the pre-
 “ dictions of the said *Quidam*, philosopher and
 “ assassin.”

When Voltaire received the letter of Maupertuis, containing a challenge, the physician, Akakia, did not fail to return an answer. He even endeavored to restore him to reason by the following most conciliatory epistle.

“ LETTER from Doctor AKAKIA to
 the Native of St. Maloes.

“ MR. PRESIDENT,

“ I HAVE received the letter with which you
 “ honored me. You inform me that you are in
 “ good health, that you have completely reco-
 “ vered your strength, and you threaten to come
 “ and murder me, if I publish the letter of La
 “ Beaumelle. What ingratitude towards your
 “ poor physician Akakia! You are not content-
 “ ed with not paying him, but are determined
 “ to be his assassin. Such a proceeding is unbe-
 “ coming the president of an academy, and a
 “ good

" good christian, as you are. Permit me to con-
 " gratulate you on the return of your health,
 " but I have not so much strength as you: I
 " have kept my bed this fortnight, and there-
 " fore must entreat you to defer the philosophi-
 " cal experiment you are so desirous of making.
 " Perhaps you mean to dissect me, but consider
 " I am not a giant from Terra Australis, and
 " that my brain is so small you can acquire no
 " new ideas, on the nature of the soul, from an
 " examination of its fibres. Besides, if you kill
 " me, be so good as to remember that M. de la
 " Beaumelle has promised he will pursue me to
 " hell.. He will not fail to go thither after me,
 " for though the hole, which is to be bored, by
 " your order, to the center of the earth, and
 " which must lead straight down to hell, be not
 " yet begun, there are other methods of getting
 " thither. And he will take care that I shall suffer
 " as much ill treatment in the other world as I
 " have experienced persecution from you in this.
 " Can you think of carrying your animosity
 " so far? Have the goodness moreover to con-
 " sider another particular—If you can but heat
 " your imagination just sufficient to peep into fu-
 " turity, you must perceive that if you come to
 " murder me at Leipzig, where you are not more
 " beloved than any where else, and where your

“ letter is deposited, you will run a risk of being
 “ hanged, which would too much hasten the
 “ moment of your maturity, and be quite unbe-
 “ coming the president of an academy. I would
 “ therefore advise you immediately to declare
 “ the letter of La Beaumelle a forgery, and an
 “ attack on your reputation, at one of your aca-
 “ demical meetings, after which you will per-
 “ haps be allowed to condemn me as the dis-
 “ turber of your vanity.

“ I am still very weak; you will find me in
 “ bed, and only able to throw my syringe or my
 “ chamber-pot at your head; but, as soon as I
 “ get a little strength, I will charge my pistols,
 “ *cum pulvere pyrio*, and multiplying the mass by
 “ the square of the velocity, till the action and
 “ you are both reduced to a cypher; will lodge
 “ some lead in your brain, of which it appears
 “ to stand in great need.

“ It is a sad thing for you, that the Germans,
 “ whom you have so much despised, should have
 “ invented gunpowder; and you ought equally
 “ to lament that they have discovered the art
 “ of printing.

“ Adieu, my dear President,

“ A K A K I A.

“ P. S.

“ P.S. As we have here fifty or sixty per-
 “ sons who have ridiculed you prodigiously, they
 “ beg leave to enquire what day you intend to
 “ murder them all.”

“ It was hoped this last cordial would have
 “ had so good an effect on the acrimonious spirit
 “ of the native of St. Maloes, that he would
 “ have desisted from his cruel experiments, that
 “ he would no longer have persecuted the Swift
 “ nor the Akakias, that he would have left the
 “ Germans in peace, and that, hereafter, when
 “ his health should be perfectly re-established, he
 “ might even have laughed at the symptoms of
 “ his malady.

“ But the physician, Akakia, like a prudent
 “ man, was desirous not to hurt the delicacy of
 “ the native of St. Maloes, and, humbly ad-
 “ dressing himself to the Eternal Secretary of the
 “ Eternal Academy, wrote to him thus:

“ To the ETERNAL SECRETARY,

“ I SEND you, Sir, the sentence of death
 “ pronounced against me by the President, with
 “ my appeal to the public, and the certificates
 “ of protection granted me by all the physicians
 “ and apothecaries of Leipzig. You see, Sir, the
 “ President does not confine the experiments he
 “ has

" has projected to make on the giants of Terra
 " Australis to them alone, but that he is absolutely
 " determined to separate my soul from my body in
 " these northern climates; this is the first time that
 " a President of an academy has wished to murder
 " one of his counsellors. Is that the principle
 " of the least action? What a terrible man is
 " this President! On his left hand he pronounces
 " one man guilty of forgery, assassinate another
 " on his right, and proves: there is a God by *A*
 " *plus B* divided by *Z*. His *quod* has certainly
 " never been seen. I cannot help reflecting, Sir,
 " that when the President shall have killed, dis-
 " sected, and buried me, it will be necessary to
 " read my eulogium according to laudable cus-
 " tom. If he is chosen to perform this, he will
 " be somewhat embarrassed; as he was known
 " to be in the case of the late Marechal de
 " Schmettau, whom he had not used very well
 " while living. Should you be appointed to
 " pronounce my Funeral Oration, you too will
 " find some difficulties. You are a priest and
 " holy. I have no such holiness. You are a
 " Calvinist, I a Papist; you are an author, and
 " so am I; you are in good health, and I am a
 " physician. Thus, Sir, to avoid a funeral ora-
 " tion, and leave every one at his ease, suffer
 " me to die by the cruel hand of the President,
 " and

“ and erase me from the number of your elect.
 “ You cannot but be sensible, likewise, that as I
 “ am condemned to death by his sentence, I
 “ ought to be first degraded; strike me therefore
 “ out of your list, and place me with the falsi-
 “ fier Koenig, who has had the misfortune to
 “ have reason on his side. I shall patiently expect
 “ death along with this criminal.

“ *Pariterque cedentes ignovere Diis.*

“ I am, Sir, metaphysically,

“ Your most humble

“ And most obedient servant,

“ A K A K I A.”

It will now be necessary to speak of the literati who took part in the quarrel between M. de Mairpierre and M. de Voltaire.

Several writers shared in the danger and glory of this quarrel; but no one took a more distinguished part in it than La Beaumelle, who was then very young. He was returning from Copenhagen, and stopped sometimes at Berlin, where his first care was to pay a visit to M. de Voltaire.

“ I had no knowledge of him (says La Beaumelle) but by his works, and some letters he had written to Copenhagen, where I was Royal Professor of the French Belles Lettres, and, in
 “ right

“ right of that, Counsellor to the Ecclesiastical
 “ Consistory. The subject of these letters was
 “ an edition of the French classic authors, which
 “ I had projected for the use of the Prince Royal
 “ of Denmark. Lord Tyrconnel, our Minister,
 “ to whom I addressed myself on this occasion,
 “ told me, I ought to flatter M. de Voltaire, be-
 “ cause he was a dangerous, and attach myself to
 “ M. de Maupertuis, because he was a worthy,
 “ man; and, perhaps, the only Frenchman whom
 “ the King of Prussia really esteemed.

“ I did not follow this advice; the studies of
 “ M. de Maupertuis lying in a different line from
 “ those I had prosecuted. I also thought passion
 “ seemed to influence Lord Tyrconnel, in the con-
 “ tempt he testified for M. de Voltaire. That
 “ poet was then at Potsdam. I informed him of
 “ my arrival, telling him, that the desire of see-
 “ ing three great men had brought me into Prus-
 “ sia; and, though he was only the second, I
 “ would nevertheless see him first.

“ I went to Potsdam, on the 14th of Novem-
 “ ber, 1751, and only saw M. de Voltaire, with
 “ whom I remained four hours, he having done
 “ me the honor to invite me to dine with him.
 “ He asked me a great many questions, and some
 “ very improper ones. The tendency of most of
 “ them was to discover whether I had any de-
 “ signs

“ signs on the place of La Metrie, who was lately
 “ dead ; but, as my business was of another nature,
 “ and as this visit was to pay him my respects,
 “ and not to make him my confident, my an-
 “ swers only gave him to understand he would
 “ not be able to penetrate my intentions.

“ He asked me, who the other two great men
 “ were, whom I came to see. I told him, one of
 “ them was the King. Oh, replied he, it is not
 “ so easy to gain admittance to the reverend Fa-
 “ ther Abbot. And who might be the third?
 “ M. de Maupertuis. He gave a sarcastic smile,
 “ and I thought I could perceive he would rather
 “ I had answered, M. Peloutier ; the author of
 “ an excellent History of the Celts.

“ He discoursed with me concerning his Age
 “ of Louis XIV. and I spoke of my Letters of Ma-
 “ dame de Maintenon. He desired to see them,
 “ but recollecting that a manuscript of Sevigné’s
 “ Letters, which Thiriot had lent him, had soon
 “ after been printed at Troyes, I refused mine
 “ with as much politeness as if I had not remem-
 “ bered that anecdote. He replied very abruptly
 “ to my refusal, *and who asks them of you.*

“ I endeavoured to atone, but I perceived my
 “ efforts had little effect. Knowing he was ex-
 “ travagantly fond of praise, I made continual
 “ efforts at flattery ; but in this my awkward mo-
 “ desty

“ deſty ſuffered me to have but little ſucceſs. I
 “ have not ſufficient effrontery perſonally to praiſe
 “ either thoſe I eſteem or thoſe I deſpiſe.

“ I left Potsdam too much diſſatisfied with
 “ M. de Voltaire not to be diſſatisfied with myſelf.
 “ I had been alarmed at the perfidy of his ſmile,
 “ the inequality of his temper, the rudeneſs of
 “ his manner, and the harſhneſs of his character.
 “ But inclined to pardon every thing in M. de
 “ Voltaire, I ſaid to myſelf, I have viſited this
 “ man on an improper day, he has had an indi-
 “ poſition which has rendered him deceitful, ſe-
 “ vere, and unfeeling. What pity that the ſoul
 “ ſhould depend ſo much on the operations of
 “ the ſtomach !

“ On the firſt of December I received a letter
 “ from him, in which he told me, I ſhould
 “ highly oblige him if I would lend him *My*
 “ *Thoughts*, a work of mine, of which he had heard
 “ a great character. I long heſitated. This work
 “ was not common at Berlin. I did not wiſh to
 “ make myſelf known there by a book, though
 “ I knew books of very little merit had made
 “ the fortunes of their authors. In it I had praiſed
 “ the King of Pruffia, and did not deſire my
 “ praiſes ſhould be thought intereſted. It was
 “ ſufficient that theſe excluſive praiſes had cauſed
 “ ſome jealousy at Copenhagen, and I thought
 “ it

" it beneath me to make a merit in Prussia of what
 " had been considered as a crime in Denmark,

" Madame de ** at length determined me.
 " I sent my book to M. de Voltaire, with a letter,
 " in which I contradicted, in the strongest
 " terms, the report he had circulated, that I
 " wished to succeed La Mettrie.

" He returned it in three days by his valet de
 " chambre, but without writing to me. The
 " 70th page was marked, it contained the following words :

' Let us examine all history, ancient or modern,
 ' we shall find no example of a Prince
 ' having given a pension of seven thousand
 ' crowns to a man of letters, merely because he
 ' was such. There have been greater poets than
 ' Voltaire, but never any so well rewarded, because
 ' true taste sets no bounds to its gifts.
 ' The King of Prussia heaps favors on men of
 ' abilities, precisely for the same reasons which
 ' induce a petty Prince of Germany to heap favors
 ' on a buffoon or a dwarf.'

" The 7th of December the King came from
 " Berlin to Potsdam, and with him came M. de
 " Voltaire. I paid him another visit; he mentioned
 " my book, and with great asperity made
 " many severe and judicious remarks, with which,
 " at the time, I was far from being pleased,
 " but

“ but by which I have since greatly profited.
 “ He said, he could not have believed that my
 “ haste to enter on my project of the classics,
 “ at Copenhagen, could have induced me to treat
 “ him so ill as I had done in that book.

“ Surprized at this reproach, I asked, what
 “ had given him offence. He quoted, after his
 “ manner, the passage I have just cited. I re-
 “ peated it literally several times, asserting, it
 “ redounded to his glory, and still more to that
 “ of the King. Then, replied he, I know not
 “ what I read. Perhaps not, at this moment,
 “ answered I, for it is most certain I have nei-
 “ ther really offended, nor intended to offend.
 “ I explained the passage a thousand different
 “ ways, but could not make him understand it
 “ in the only sense in which it could possibly
 “ be understood.

“ However, ashamed, no doubt, of so much
 “ equivocation, he, at last, fixed on the phrase,”
 “ There never was any poet so well rewarded as
 “ Voltaire.”—He told me, “ that what the
 “ King gave him was not a reward, but an in-
 “ demnification only, and added, in so many
 “ words, you have certainly supposed me a poor
 “ man. I replied, I knew him to be very rich,
 “ but that it was not his wealth which rendered
 “ him so estimable. He answered, he had a
 “ place :

“ place; and was Chamberlain to the King. I repeated his own retort on Congreve, and told him, that, if he had only been Chamberlain, I should not have troubled myself to come and see him.

“ This reply seemed to soften. He assured me, he had no objections to the passage in question; but that it would not be so easy to make my peace with the Marquis d’Argens, who was neither a buffoon nor a dwarf; or with the Baron Polnitz, who, perhaps * * * *, but who was really a person of rank; or with Count Algarotti, who deserved much more respect; or with M. de Maupertuis, who was president of an academy, which he would never suffer to be entered by any one who had affirmed, that those persons, who were rather the King’s friends than his jesters, were only buffoons and dwarfs.

“ I went to M. de Maupertuis, not with a view of entering into an explanation, but to assure him, I had not intentionally given umbrage. He told me, it was true, that, at supper, with the King, M. de Voltaire had given a malicious interpretation to a passage in my book, as if I had meant to say, the learned men of the court were all buffoons and dwarfs, and the King himself a petty German Prince; but that Count Algarotti, having gone to M. de Voltaire’s, and transcribed

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“ the passage, had brought it to him at midnight ;
 “ that they were both of opinion, Voltaire had pur-
 “ posely wrested the sense ; for that it contained no-
 “ thing offensive, it being evident, I meant to say,
 “ the King of Prussia was as much superior to other
 “ Princes, who take delight in dwarfs and buffoons,
 “ as the learned of his court were superior to such
 “ dwarfs and buffoons ; that, probably, what had
 “ offended Voltaire, was these words, which he had
 “ not cited before the King, *There have been greater*
 “ *poets than Voltaire, but never any so well rewarded.*

“ When I asked M. de Maupertuis, whether the
 “ King was prejudiced against me, he replied, he
 “ believed not, but that he thought those at table
 “ were not very well pleased to see so much heat
 “ manifested by Voltaire, who dwelt much on their
 “ being compared to buffoons and dwarfs : a com-
 “ parison which the King might secretly think very
 “ applicable.

“ M. de Maupertuis added, if I thought the King
 “ prejudiced against me, he would advise me to send
 “ him my book, as the best method to undeceive
 “ him ; which I did, not by Darget,* whom I dis-
 “ trusted, but by M. de Frederesdorff, Valet de
 “ Chambre, and Grand Treasurer to the King ; and
 “ to this I was advised by M. de Maupertuis.

“ Unfortunately, I told Madame de ***, that I

* Then Secretary to the King of Prussia, and a friend of M.
 de Voltaire.

“ had

“ had written to the King, and sent him my book.
 “ This lady, being the intimate friend of Voltaire,
 “ told it him again, and Voltaire, no doubt, took
 “ measures with Darget that the King should nei-
 “ ther see the book nor the letter. After having
 “ been referred several times for an answer from
 “ Frederesdorff to Darget, and from Darget to Fre-
 “ deresdorff, always in a mysterious manner, I re-
 “ ceived a letter from Darget, in the King’s name,
 “ containing several things which were impossible
 “ to come from the King.

“ However irritated I might be at such a pro-
 “ cedure, which I, with sufficient reason, attribu-
 “ ted to M. de Voltaire and his party, I did not
 “ think proper to break entirely with him. A ty-
 “ ger may be won by careffes. I went to see him
 “ on the 3d of January, 1752, in company with M. de
 “ la Lande, the same who, at twenty years of age,
 “ without cabal, or the intrigues of women, was
 “ admitted into a society,* of which it is a glory to
 “ become a member at forty. He was witness to
 “ my reception from M. de Voltaire. He saw the
 “ command I possessed of myself, my mildness,
 “ compassion, and the respect I thought due to
 “ great abilities, real or supposed. I must have
 “ been deeply impressed with a desire not to be on

* *L'Académie des Sciences.*

“ ill terms with so great a man, since my moderation
 “ was so remarkable, that M. de la Lande, who is
 “ himself so temperate, expresses his astonishment
 “ at it to this day.

“ The sixth of the same month, appeared my
 “ Ode on the Queen of Denmark. It was thought
 “ very poetical, and so it was for Copenhagen, whi-
 “ ther I sent it ; and for Berlin also, where there are
 “ perhaps fewer persons of taste than at Copen-
 “ hagen. Though the Countess of ** had re-
 “ quested M. de Voltaire not to give it a bad cha-
 “ racter, he decried it to the King. I was not hurt,
 “ but I caused him to be informed, that my verses
 “ were, at least, better than his conduct, or his
 “ Epistle against God.

“ The King, dining in public, after speaking of
 “ this ode, said, I had a collection of the letters of
 “ Madame de Maintenon, but that, probably, the
 “ manner in which I had acquired them, would not
 “ suffer me to prove their authenticity. M. de Vol-
 “ taire was the only person to whom I had spoken
 “ concerning these letters ; I had assured him, I
 “ came properly by them, and had no doubt but
 “ they were genuine, though I was not acquainted
 “ with any of the relations or friends of Madame
 “ de Maintenon. He then believed, or pretended
 “ to believe, they were pirated. I forgave him
 “ this shameful conjecture, and forgave his having
 “ made

“ made it public ; it was perfectly consistent with
“ the logic of his heart.

“ Madame de * * bore my complaints to M. de
“ Voltaire, who acknowledged he was mistaken,
“ but afterwards spread a report, that this collec-
“ tion, which I said was so valuable, might be
“ had at St. Cyr for four louis. This was taking
“ a strange advantage of the little knowledge the
“ Germans have of the ladies of St. Cyr.

“ This falsehood came to the ears of the Queens.
“ I had the satisfaction to undeceive them, by let-
“ ters, which perhaps afford few proofs of my dis-
“ cretion, but which detected the deceit of my, I
“ would say, enemies, if I knew of more than one.
“ Madame de * *, who had flattered herself she
“ should be able to reconcile us, reproached M. de
“ Voltaire with this new act of hostility. He denied
“ it, and said the report first originated at Lord
“ Tyrconnel's. This was true, but he it was who
“ first raised it there. M. de Voltaire had excited a
“ coldness towards me in Lord Tyrconnel, to whom
“ I had been strongly recommended, by persuad-
“ ing this nobleman I had deceived him, in pre-
“ tending to intrust him with the true reason of
“ my journey to Berlin.

“ On the 27th of January, I had an adventure of
“ gallantry, which was attended with some disagree-
“ able consequences. I was robbed, in the house of

“ a Captain of cavalry, by that very Captain him-
 “ self, whose name was Cochius, and whose wife
 “ had coquetted with me at the opera, where she
 “ was in company with the maids of honor of the
 “ Queen. Count Hake, governor of Berlin, a man
 “ educated in the hatred of the French name, took
 “ as active a part, in this affair, as if it had happened
 “ with his own wife, and related the matter, to the
 “ King, with as much false passion as if he had
 “ not spoken to a Prince who was the sincerest
 “ of the lovers of truth.

“ I was condemned without either being exa-
 “ mined or confronted with Captain Cochius,
 “ who, after having been my assassin, had the ef-
 “ frontery to become my accuser.

“ I was conducted to Spandaw, but not con-
 “ fined in the citadel. I wrote from thence to
 “ the King, Count Podewils, the Prince of Prus-
 “ sia, and the Grand Chancellor. I claimed the
 “ protection of those laws which had all been so
 “ grossly violated.

“ My friends were few, and they without in-
 “ terest. Every one abandoned my cause, though
 “ every one knew me to be innocent. M. de
 “ Maupertuis alone had the honesty not to laugh
 “ at the recital which the King, unacquainted
 “ with the truth, made of my adventure; and
 “ the fortitude to state the transaction in such a
 “ light

“ light as to disarm his Majesty of ridicule, to
 “ whom he said, that though what Captain Co-
 “ chius had alledged were true, the Captain was
 “ not the less culpable for having exceeded his
 “ authority, and plundered me of my property.

“ M. de Maupertuis having prepared the King
 “ to listen to the truth, Count Podewils acquaint-
 “ ed him with the real facts in a letter. M. Hake
 “ received orders to make me reparation. The
 “ King, in his letter to M. Hake, of which I
 “ have a collated copy, expressly says, he greatly
 “ laments my misfortune. Commissioners were
 “ named who did me immediate justice. Captain
 “ Cochius and his wife were, within three days,
 “ seized, examined, confronted, judged, condemn-
 “ ed and punished. A *lettre de cachet* confirmed
 “ their sentence.

“ The eighth of February, on my return from
 “ Berlin, the Countess of ** told me, M. de
 “ Voltaire had openly declared his detestation of
 “ the villainy of Count Hake, and that, if his ad-
 “ vice had been followed, all the French in Ber-
 “ lin would have thrown themselves at the feet
 “ of the Queens, to implore the protection of the
 “ laws, which had, in the person of a Frenchman,
 “ been so violently infringed.

“ I now yielded to my sensations of gratitude,
 “ and a desire of reconciliation, and went to re-

“ turn him thanks. He received my acknow-
 “ ledgements as if they were his due, and we
 “ promised totally to forget the past.

“ That very day I learned, from M. de la
 “ Lande, the service rendered me by M. de Mau-
 “ pertuis, and heard, from the Baron de Tau-
 “ benheim, that M. de Voltaire had said at my
 “ Lord Tyrconnel’s, my affair was nothing to the
 “ French, because I was no Frenchman ; or, if I
 “ were, I had been banished from France ; or, if not
 “ from France, at least from Denmark ; or, if I had
 “ not been banished from Denmark, I was cer-
 “ tainly a bad christian, and on that account un-
 “ worthy the protection of the Minister of the
 “ most Christian King. He had said a hundred
 “ things of this kind in a bantering way ; and,
 “ among others, that the French Minister had
 “ severely punished the person who had intro-
 “ duced my book, entitled, *Mes Pensées*, (My
 “ Thoughts) into Paris : and, in short, that I was
 “ deeply involved in debt ; though, when I was
 “ arrested, I only owed forty livres to the inn-
 “ keeper, for which sum, though it was utterly
 “ impossible I should pay it, at that moment, my
 “ goods were seized, plundered, and lost. All
 “ this was not news from the King’s supper ; I
 “ learned it from common report.

“ I re-

“ I requested Madame de ** to inform M. de
 “ Voltaire what I had heard, and to let him
 “ know how happy I should be, would he con-
 “ tradict the assertions of which he was said to
 “ be the author.

“ On the fourteenth, he sent to me twice, de-
 “ firing I would come to him. I supposed Ma-
 “ dame de ** had interfered, and that he wished
 “ to justify himself. Scarcely was I seated before
 “ he said, I am very sorry to understand, there
 “ are several copies of that book, in which the
 “ King’s Chamberlain is treated as a buffoon and
 “ a dwarf, in circulation. I replied, that before
 “ our treaty of peace, I had given a dozen to a
 “ bookseller ; that the preceding day I had bought
 “ half of them, which had cost me 250 livres, and
 “ that, therefore, there were but six copies
 “ abroad. Six copies ! answered he : they are so
 “ many daggers ! I did not promise you, return-
 “ ed I, to buy up all the copies, I have done
 “ what I have done out of regard to myself. I
 “ expected thanks, and you load me with re-
 “ proaches. I thought this dispute had been at an
 “ end, but you resume it again with more aspe-
 “ rity than ever. What strange conduct ! After
 “ having taken a turn or two in his chamber, he
 “ told me he had discovered a way to remedy the
 “ wrong. You may cancel the sheet, and insert a
 “ new

“ new one, in which you may disavow the sup-
 “ posed sense, by giving a new turn to the pas-
 “ sage. I replied, I did not admire such an ex-
 “ pedient, that the book was already made public
 “ in Paris, that therefore a cancel would answer
 “ no purpose, and that I knew not what to sub-
 “ stitute. How easily could he have relieved me
 “ from this latter embarrassment !

“ Are you not preparing, said he, a second
 “ edition at Hamburgh ? Yes, answered I, but
 “ your name cannot be inserted ; nothing will
 “ remain in it but what has some relation to laws
 “ and government. It will contain the names of
 “ none but great men. But M. de Montesquieu’s
 “ will remain ? Most certainly ; without him nei-
 “ ther I nor my book can live : but M. de Mon-
 “ tesquieu is a great man in a science which it-
 “ self is truly great : whereas poets are great only
 “ in trifles. Besides, I am much surpris’d you
 “ should wish your name to have a place in a
 “ work so reprehensible, and which you have
 “ spoken so ill of to Lord Tyrconnel.

“ Since you do not understand me, said he, I
 “ have done with you. Most willingly, replied
 “ I, and give me leave to observe, I have been
 “ thus desirous of keeping terms with you, only
 “ out of respect to the public. At these words
 “ his visage grew inflamed, his features lengthen-

“ ed,

ed, his eyes flashed fire, he foamed at the mouth, and placed his arms on his sides with a kind of majestic frenzy. You would have thought him acting one of his own tragedies. Is it thus, said he, you treat an officer to two Monarchs? Is this your treatment of the Chamberlain of the King! If you are dissatisfied, retorted I, I will treat you differently. I leave you to your choice.

The Countess of ** endeavored to reconcile us once more. She undertook to answer for M. de Voltaire, who never could answer for himself. This was a bold undertaking. Her advice was, that we should write to each other, since it was not possible for us to meet without quarreling, and that I should write first. A severe stipulation this; but when we are conscious of being in the right, trifles are disregarded. I followed her advice, and she approved my letter, although it was tinged with an air of superiority, which we often assume without perceiving it, when we are writing to a person who has acted unworthily of his character.

The next day she brought me the answer of M. de Voltaire, which I would not receive, because it was not signed, and because, instead of acceding to terms of amity, he had only answered

“ answered the direction of my letter. He complained I had refused him the title and honor of Gentleman in Ordinary to his Majesty, which is still preserved to me, said he, by the King.

“ About this time appeared his Age of Louis XIV. I affirmed, as did all persons of taste, that it was full of defects, of trifles, and of witticisms. Some Germans seemed enchanted with it, and I drew up a critique, purposely to undeceive them. M. de Voltaire was informed of this by the Countess of **, to whom I told all these kind of secrets, because I knew she would tell them him again. To conceive his anxiety, it is necessary to have a thorough knowledge of his vanity.

“ Madame de ** gave me to understand, M. de Voltaire would take an exemplary vengeance, and that several Sovereigns would grant him their support. I answered, had she commanded me to sacrifice my works to my respect for her, I should not have hesitated, but that, by repeating to me the menaces of M. de Voltaire, both she and he had put it out of my power to retract.”

In fact, M. de la Beaumelle published the Age of Louis XIV, with notes severely critical.

M. de Voltaire replied by a Supplement still more severe than the notes, and at last procured the

the author to be imprisoned in the Bastille. M. de la Beaumelle, on his enlargement, published, in answer to the Supplement to the Age of Louis XIV, some very satirical letters, which were reprinted in 1761, and the two authors, from that time, never ceased to load each other with abuse.

Among the scandalous reports, which M. de la Beaumelle had propagated in Prussia, there were several which deserved refutation, and this principally engaged M. de Voltaire to write the following letter, which is not to be found in his works.

**A LETTER from M. DE VOLTAIRE
to KOENIG, after his leaving Prussia,
and his arrival at Francfort on the
Maine.**

YOUR martyr is arrived at Francfort, and so weak as to have a very near prospect of that unknown country where we shall learn the principles of things, and discover what is that motive force, concerning which we reason so profoundly in these nether regions, but of which I am at present nearly destitute. I have, as I told you, been undeceived with respect to the false ideas given me by your enemies, about *relative* and *absolute velocity*; but it is more difficult to shake off the illusions

sions of this world, and those sensations which attach us to it, even to the last moment of life. The sensations I have felt, for having taken your part, have been sufficiently severe; yet I do not repent, and I shall die in this faith. It always appeared to me absurd to make the existence of God depend on $A \text{ plus } B, \text{ divided by } Z$.

What would become of the human race, if it were necessary to study mechanics and astronomy to be convinced of the existence of the Supreme Being. He who has created us all, ought to be manifest to all, and the commonest proofs are the best, because they are common. We only stand in need of the assistance of our eyes, and not of algebra, to perceive the sun. God has provided every thing necessary for our smallest wants, and to be certain of his existence is our greatest. He has granted us sufficient assistance to obtain this certainty. But as it is by no means necessary we should know what motive force is, and whether it is or is not a property essential to matter, we are ignorant of its nature, but we talk about it. There are a thousand principles which escape our utmost researches, because the Creator did not intend we should understand all his secrets. It has long been imagined Nature does every thing the shortest way, employs the smallest force, and is the greatest œconomist possible. But what will
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the maintainers of this opinion reply to those who demonstrate, that our arms employ a power of near fifty pounds to raise a weight of one pound; that the heart exerts an immense force to express a single drop of blood; that a carp lays ten thousand eggs to produce one or two other carps; and that an oak yields an innumerable quantity of acorns, of which, very frequently, not one becomes a tree. I shall always think, as I wrote to you long ago, that profusion, rather than economy, is the characteristic of Nature.

As to your particular dispute with your adversary, the opinion that justice and reason are on your side, gains, with me, continual strength. You know I did not declare for you till you had sent me your Appeal to the Public. I then openly proclaimed what has been since repeated by all the academies, and I besides took the liberty to burlesque a very ridiculous book which your persecutor wrote about the same time.

All this has plunged me in a multitude of misfortunes, which ought not to have arisen from so slight a cause. This also is one of the profusions of Nature. She generates innumerable evils, which spring up in swarms from the smallest seed.

I can assure you, our common persecutor has paid no attention to his favorite law of parsimony. He took out the spicket from the tun of evil, when

when he was in the presence of Jupiter. What a strange falling off, to pass from Jupiter to La Beaumelle ! How can he excuse his want of sensibility in raising up against me so mean an enemy ? Can he prevent its being known that he published, not long since, a Memoir by La Beaumelle, revised and corrected by himself ? Is it not well known where he resided from the first to the fourth of last May, under the name of Morel, to have this libel printed ? Is not the bookseller known, and that Francfort is printed in the title page. What an employment for the President of an Academy ! On the twelfth of May he sent a copy to his Serene Highness the Duke of Saxe Gotha, hoping by that to deprive me of the protection and kindness with which I was honored during my illness at Gotha. This was bad calculation for a mathematician. La Beaumelle was confined in the Bastille from the 22d of April, for having insulted citizens and sovereigns in two wretched publications ; he could not therefore send to Gotha and other courts of Germany this ridiculous Memoir, printed in his name ; this is an argument not to be refuted. It is in the species of probabilities what yours are in that of demonstrations. What I wrote to you, about a year ago, is certainly true. Artifices are the worst weapons for men of letters. They imagine themselves politicians, and they are

are only knaves. There is no policy in literature. We ought to state facts, speak truth, and die martyrs. But to cause one's friend to be condemned for forgery, to vaunt of moderation for being absent when sentence was pronounced against him, not to reply to the clearest proofs, to pay the pen of a hireling with the academy's money, to associate with the meanest of scribblers, be engaged in nothing but cabals, and personally to accuse whom we have personally oppressed, these acts are to the everlasting disgrace of the human understanding.

The Belles Lettres are commonly a field for disputes, they are on this occasion a field of battle. We are no longer amused with laughable and innocent jests on the dissection of giants, or on the method of heating the imagination to look into futurity:

*Ludus enim trepidum genuit certamen et iram,
Ira truces inimicitias et funebre bellum.*

I do not dispute, when the question turns on poetry or eloquence; it is then an affair of taste, and every one has his own. I cannot, by making a man yawn, prove him in the wrong.

I reply to the critics in any question of philosophy or history, because on these subjects we may sometimes make seven or eight readers, who will give us a quarter of an hour's attention, under-

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stand reason, and I sometimes reply to calumnies, because there are more readers of slanderous libels than of useful books.

For example, Sir, when my enemies proclaim, in print, I informed an illustrious author you intended to write against his works; I reply, you know by incontestible proofs, not only that this is false, but that I have always done the precise contrary.

When they dare assert, in periodical publications, that I have sold my works to three or four booksellers in Germany and Holland, I am obliged to answer, they are liars, since there is no bookseller in either of those countries can say I have ever sold him the smallest manuscript.

When they affirm, I falsely assume the title of Gentleman in Ordinary to the King of France, am I not forced to say, that, without ever adding titles to my name, I have nevertheless the honor to possess that place, which is still continued to me by the King, my master?

When I am attacked concerning my birth, ought I not, out of respect to my family, to answer, I am born the equal of those who hold the same place with myself; and that if I have spoken with modesty on this subject, it is because that very place was formerly occupied by the Montmorencies and Chatillons?

When

When they declare in print a certain Sovereign said to me, 'I continue your pension, but forbid you to appear in my presence.' I reply, whoever advanced this absurdity has lied, impudently.

When it is said, in Journals and Gazettes, that I published the variations of the *Henriade* under the name of M. Marmontel, is it not likewise my duty to declare, this is false; that M. Marmontel has written a preface to one of the editions of the *Henriade*, and that the Abbé Lenglet Dufrenoy, had before published the variations at Paris? When they assert, I am the author of *I* know not what book, entitled, *The Beauties of the French Language*; I answer, I have never read it; and I say the same concerning all the impertinent pieces which anonymous writers circulate in my name, a name indeed, but too well known.

When my enemies publish a pretended letter from Lord Tyrconnel, I am obliged to give the lie publicly to the calumniator: and, since he fabricates these wretched libels to gain a little money, I declare myself ready to maintain him as long as he lives, if he can prove a single fact he has advanced.

When they affirm, I shall soon write against the works of a dignified author, whom I must

esteem to the last moment of my life, I reply, that, till now, slander was confined to the past, and never extended itself to the future; that this is *beating the imagination* too much, and that I will make the first who has the audacity to write against the August Personage, alluded to, repent his temerity.

When they assert, I have falsely boasted there is an edition of the *Henriade* honored with the preface of a Sovereign; I answer, it is not true I made any such boast, it is not true that this edition exists, and it is not true that this preface, which really does exist, has ever been improperly cited; it has always been cited in the editions of the *Henriade*, since that of M. Mar-montel, and was written to be placed at the head of this poem, which the illustrious Sovereign, of whom I here speak, intended to have had engraved, a double honor done to this work.

When it is asserted, I have stolen a Madrigal from the late M. de la Motte; I reply, I never steal verses, I have written but too many, and have given both verses and money to several young writers, without these facts ever having been mentioned, by me or by them.

In this manner, Sir, am I obliged to refute the slanders with which I am every day loaded by various authors; some of whom are entirely unknown to me, and others indebted to my generosity.

nerosity. I might ask them, why they take part, with such vehemence, in a quarrel in which they are not concerned; and why they still continue to persecute me on the very brink of the grave? But I ask them nothing; continue to defend your cause as I defend mine. There are occasions in which we ought to say with Cicero,

Seipsum deferere turpissimum est.

When we die we should leave proofs of our friendship to our friends, repentance to our enemies, and our reputation in the hands of the public. I am, Sir, &c,

We come now to the different places in which M. DE VOLTAIRE resided, after the adventure at Francfort: we shall speak of his retreat near Geneva, and in the Pays de Gex, and of the troubles he there encountered.

M. DE VOLTAIRE having left Francfort, where he had experienced so many difficulties, continued his journey to Mayence. Here he stopped, 'to dry his clothes after his shipwreck.' He went from thence to Manheim, and the Elector Palatine received him with all the respect due to superior abilities. He left the court of this amiable and beneficent Prince, and passed sometime at Strasbourg, in a house without the city, where he saw no company, except a few intimate friends.

He was then employed on his *Annals of the Empire*, which were published by Schopflin at Colmar. The desire of superintending the impression of his book induced him to go to that city, the situation of which pleased him extremely.

He requested the Duke of Wirtemberg to grant him, on an improving lease, an old chateau at Horbourg, near Colmar. This proposition had been agreed to, but for Father Croust, Superior of the Jesuits at Colmar, and brother to the Confessor of the Dauphiness, who beheld with regret an infidel in that city, intent on propagating the principles of free-thinking, and obliged M. de Voltaire to seek another asylum.

Marechal Richelieu, who was desirous to see him, had appointed to meet him at Lyons. Voltaire went thither, and there continued near three months. He would have stayed longer, but Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop of that city, looked on him with an evil eye; Voltaire paid him a visit, but met with a very cold reception. The Cardinal even wrote against him to court, and said to those who spoke in favor of his continuance at Lyons, *You know not how much mischief he has done here.*

The health of the French poet began to decline, through labor, the fatigues of travelling, and pining, at not being permitted to return to Paris,

Paris. It is true he was not formally banished, but several works, attributed to him, and manuscript copies of the *Pacelle*, which began to be circulated, had incensed against him the chiefs of the law, the gospel, and the government. He foresaw difficulties which threatened to embitter the remainder of his life, and therefore determined to retire to a free country.

His health was at first the pretext for this resolution. He was troubled with an obstinate sciatica, for which the remedies of the physicians of Lyons had been insufficient; and resolved to consult the celebrated Tronchin, who was rising into great reputation. To take the benefit of his advice more easily, he purchased a house near Geneva, called *Les Delices*. The Genevese physician removed his disorder, not so much by the use of medicine, as by subjecting him to a regimen, and prescribing patience, the first of all remedies.

The situation of this house was, during the summer, extremely agreeable. M. de Voltaire wished for a winter residence, and bought another near Lausanne. This new retreat was a delightful spot. "There is not (says he, in a letter to M. Darget) a finer prospect in the world than that from my house. Figure to yourself fifteen windows in front; a lake twelve leagues
O 4 " long;

‘ long, presenting itself to the eye, and another four or five in length; a terrace which commands the prospect of a hundred gardens, while, at the bottom of mine, the same lake appears like a vast mirror, beyond which we see the fruitful fields of Savoy, overtopped by the Alps, that lift their heads to the skies and form a prodigious amphitheatre. In one word, imagine a house in which I feel no inconvenience, except from flies, during the most rigorous winter; and which has been ornamented by Madame Denis, with all the taste of a Parisian.”

There was at that time a select society of amiable ladies and respectable gentlemen at Lausanne, who amused themselves by performing plays. M. de Voltaire and Madame Denis, his niece, wished to partake of this entertainment. They were not satisfied with merely instructing the actors and actresses, but played themselves in several pieces, especially in *Zaïre*, in which they gained universal applause. The Baron de Corevon, Lord of the Pays de Vaud, wrote to M. de Voltaire, after the performance, and paid him a very flattering compliment. The poet replied, on a card, “ *Zaïre* and good old Lufignan are much obliged to the Baron de Corevon. Such are the persons they are ambitious to please.”

Vol-

Voltaire was not only ambitious to please, but succeeded. He flattered both in verse and prose, and rendered himself agreeable by sprightly sallies and ingenious compliments. Yet he preferred *Les Delices* to his house at Monrion, near Lausanne; but did not long enjoy happiness there, for he could only perform plays by stealth, and could not reconcile himself to the *the perruwig-pated fellows of Geneva*, for so he stiled the magistrates, who interrupted his amusements. He treated the ministers with as little respect, calling them, in his satirical verses, buffoons in short cloaks; church sycophants, and preachers of stolen sermons. This, in a great measure, occasioned the troubles he met with there; but he concealed the true reason, and rather chose to attribute his not being able to enjoy his seat at *Les Delices* to Jean Jaques Rousseau.

“ He (says Voltaire, in a letter to the Chevalier de Pezai) incensed against me several
 “ citizens of Geneva, enemies to the magistracy.
 “ He excited them to render the council of Geneva odious, and to reproach it for suffering,
 “ contrary to law, a catholic to acquire possessions in their territories, though any citizen
 “ of Geneva may purchase estates in France, and
 “ enjoy places in the finances. Thus this man,
 “ who preached up liberty of conscience at Paris,
 “ and

“ and who had so much need of toleration himself, endeavored to establish in Geneva the most oppressive and ridiculous bigotry.

“ M. Tronchin, himself, heard one of the inhabitants, who has long been the principal fire-brand of the republic, assert, that it was absolutely necessary to take M. Rousseau's advice, and remove me from Les Delices, which is situated in the neighbourhood of Geneva, M. Tronchin, who is as respectable a man as he is an excellent physician, warded off this blow aimed at me, though he did not inform me of it till long after. I then foresaw the troubles which would soon arise in the little Republic of Geneva, and refused signing a life-lease, &c.”

This passage clearly proves, that M. de Voltaire had a party formed against him at Geneva, but it is far from proving Rousseau was the head of that party.

Whatever may be the truth, M. de Voltaire, who foresaw the storm which threatened him, endeavored to procure an estate in France. He purchased Tournai and Fernei, and fixed his residence in the latter, the castle of which he rebuilt. Here he received, sometimes as Lord of the Manor and sometimes as philosopher, the homage of Princes, Literati, and all those whose curiosity induced them to become his visitors. Fernei had been

been a lordship, absolutely free from all imposts or dues to the King, from the time of Henry IV. There were not two estates in the kingdom which possessed the like privileges. The King confirmed them to him by brevet, and granted him a pension of two thousand livres, in 1761, independent of that he already possessed, and the other favors of the court. What was there wanting to complete his happiness? Nothing. But his fondness for writing on subjects which he ought to have treated with more respect. The frenzy of obtaining, not only admirers of his talents, but partisans to his opinions,* once more disturbed his repose.

In 1766, after the melancholy affair which brought the Chevalier de la Barré to the scaffold, he feared being arrested, because the Philosophical Dictionary was often quoted during the trial of that rash headlong youth. He then resolved to retire to Wessel, a city in the jurisdiction of the King of Prussia. For that he had thus resolved sufficiently appears, from a letter he wrote, on the subject of such a report having been spread, which was not without foundation. "It is true, (writes he) I felt the greatest and most

* Mr. Sherlock says, in his letters, that Voltaire was always ambitious of founding a religion, but he certainly destroyed more than he founded.

"durable

“ durable indignation, but I did not take this
 “ supposed resolution. I might have done it,
 “ had I been younger and more vigorous : but
 “ to transplant at my age, and in my infirm con-
 “ dition, is very difficult. I shall wait under the
 “ trees I have reared for that moment when I
 “ shall hear no more of these horrors, which make
 “ us prefer the bears of the mountain to apes
 “ and tigers in the shape of men.”

The fears of M. de Voltaire were soon after revived, and he had recourse to a new expedient, peaceably to enjoy his retreat at Fernei. He pretended to be converted.

In 1768 and 1769, all the Gazettes were filled with the recantations, confessions, and communications of the author of the Philosophical Dictionary. He sent them himself to the Editors of the Gazettes. This is not a doubtful anecdote. I have had in my possession one of his letters, sent to the editor of a provincial paper, which has an extensive sale both in France and foreign countries.

M. de Voltaire's taking the sacrament on Easter day, 1768, in the parish church of Fernei, and afterwards making a discourse to the people, assembled at the foot of the altar, against theft, on account of his having been robbed of a cow, appeared a great impropriety to the Bishop of Anneci. That prelate did not conceal his opinion from

from M. de Voltaire, who defended himself as well as he was able. Their letters are to be found at the end of Voltaire's *Tableau de l'Esprit*, and in other books; we shall not, therefore, make extracts.

We shall only add, that M. de Voltaire, at Easter, 1769, fearing to be refused the sacrament, took advantage of a fever with which he was then attacked, to send for the Host as a viaticum. He had sent for the curate of Fernei, offering to make all requisite declarations and protestations; whether public or private, and to submit himself to whatever was customary. At the same time, a Capuchin, of Gex, was procured, who performed what his duty required, while Voltaire appeared to be dying. The declarations made on this occasion, by the pretended convert, have been so often printed, that repetitions are useless.

The curate of Fernei, knowing that on the very day when Voltaire said he was dying, he had walked in his garden, and had spoken in terms of the highest ridicule of the sacred ceremony which had just been performed, perceived he had been again made a dupe. He shewed an extreme coolness to M. de Voltaire, and the Capuchins of Gex refused to be seen any more at the castle, though the latter called himself their spiritual father. He had indeed

indeed letters of affiliation to their order, which he had elegantly framed and placed in the most conspicuous part of his house. As these letters are sometimes given without being filled up, a lawyer at Grenoble had obtained some and sent them to Voltaire; but it is false, that they had been immediately addressed to him by the General of the Order, as he said and wrote.

Voltaire, however, received the Capuchins when they came to visit him, very politely; but, notwithstanding his professions of friendship, he could not refrain from a few witticisms. He at first bestowed alms on them, but latterly refused, on account of their denying him some little services.

M. Gros, his curate, obtained likewise from him assistance for the poor and the sick, but had not the same success in such applications to him as M. Hugonet, the present curate of Fernei, a wise and moderate man, who seeing to how little purpose it was to endeavor the conversion of Voltaire, contented himself to live politely and on good terms with him, without any great familiarity, and to solicit charity for the poor of the parish. The Lord of Fernei seldom refused, because he really esteemed him, and was not insensible to the sufferings of others,

We

We forgot to relate, that when M. de Voltaire made his pretended preparation for the sacrament, he caused Bourdaloue's sermons to be read to him while he was at table, especially if any person present had any direct or indirect connexion with the Bishop of Anneci. He paraphrased the most striking passages, and added remarks which must have made great impression on those who were not aware of his secret designs.

By these exterior appearances of religion, he hoped to silence the Bishop of Anneci, who had written to court to procure the removal of this leader of modern free-thinkers from his diocese. But this prelate was not to be so deceived, he being well informed how much the behavior of Voltaire was inconsistent with his pretended conversion. He gave the false penitent to understand, he should not change his opinion till he changed his conduct, and Voltaire, having insured his safety by the power of his patrons, and the respect inspired by his age and abilities, endeavored no longer to deceive his Bishop, but openly attacked him with ridicule and satire.

This was indeed the general style of his conversation, as well as his writings, towards all those who had displeased him, or who, in a moment of vacancy, might afford him a subject for laughter. How often was Father Adam, the companion of his
his

his retreat, presented to strangers as *not the first man of the world* ? How many times, when discoursing with the Capuchins, has he talked of *our Seraphic Father St. Francis* ? This repetition of the same jests was not perceived by strangers, who only called at Fernei to pay him their passing respects ; but appeared somewhat insipid to those who heard them daily.

The conversation and behavior of Madame Denis was, in general, much more pleasing, though less replete with wit. Almost all travellers have praised her affability and polite attention. “ This Lady “ (says one of them, who wrote in 1774) has long “ been the companion of her uncle, and is de- “ serving that honor for her understanding, her “ acquaintance with several sciences, her taste in “ various arts, and her talents for music. She “ plays both comedy and tragedy equal to the “ best actresses in Paris ; it is even said, she has “ written several dramatic works, which do her “ much honor, though her modesty conceals “ them with as much care as any other woman “ would take to make them known. She is said “ to have written a part of the charming comedy “ of *Nanine*.

“ Her tender attachment to her uncle has “ been always the same ; though about the year “ 1767, it was pretended they had quarreled :
but

“ but this was only a pretext for her journey, as
 “ it is now well known she went to Paris to solicit
 “ permission for her uncle to return to that capital,
 “ and to remove the obstacles thrown in the way
 “ of this project, by the decrees issued against
 “ certain works attributed to M. de Voltaire.
 “ Though she did not succeed, she yet enjoyed
 “ the satisfaction of endeavoring to serve an un-
 “ cle she tenderly loved, and whom she has fre-
 “ quently restored to peace and mild content, in
 “ those moments when the violence of criticism,
 “ and apprehensions, sometimes not ill founded,
 “ harassed and disturbed the tranquillity of his
 “ life.”

After this recital of intermingled Vexations, Dis-
 putes, Disappointments, and brilliant Successes,
 we next shall recapitulate some of the generous
 Actions which have signalized the Life of M.
 de VOLTAIRE.

If M. de Voltaire was occasionally too parsimo-
 nious, as has been asserted, it cannot be denied
 but he made an honorable use of his fortune in
 his retreat. He was the first who endeavored to
 vindicate the memory of John Calas, whose his-
 tory we shall here give, for the benefit of those
 readers who are but imperfectly acquainted with
 that strange and cruel affair.

P

This

This unfortunate old man, aged sixty-eight, had exercised the profession of a merchant at Toulouse more than forty years, and was esteemed, by all who had lived with him, an indulgent parent. His wife, himself, and all his children were protestants, except one, who had abjured those principles, and was allowed a small pension by his father. He was so far from being actuated by that spirit of fanaticism which loosens all the bands of society, that he approved the conversion of his son Louis Calas, and had retained in his house, for thirty years, a maid servant, who was a zealous catholic, and who had brought up almost all his children.

One of the sons of John Calas was a man of learning. He was considered as a person of a violent and melancholy temper. This young man being incapable either to enter into trade, for which he was unfit, or procure himself to be admitted a lawyer, because he was not able to obtain certificates, that he professed the catholic religion, resolved to put an end to his life, and even hinted his design to one of his friends. He confirmed himself in this resolution, by reading whatever had been written on the subject of suicide.

At length, having lost some money at play, he chose that very day for the execution of his design.

design. A friend of his, and of the family, named Lavaisse, a young man, nineteen years of age, and of an amiable disposition, the son of a celebrated Advocate at Toulouse, had arrived in the evening from Bourdeaux, and by accident supped at the house of Calas. The father, the mother, Mark Anthony, their eldest, and Peter, their second son, sat down to table together. After supper they retired into a little parlor, and Mark Anthony disappeared. At length, when young Lavaisse was about to depart, Peter Calas and he went down stairs, and found Mark Anthony hanging in his shirt, at the door of the warehouse, and his cloaths folded up and lying on a counter. His shirt was not even rumpled, his hair was combed smooth, and there was no wound nor mark of violence on the body.

Some fanatic, among the populace, cried out, that John Calas had hung his own son, Mark Anthony. This, in an instant, ran unanimously among the multitude, and others presently added, that the deceased intended to have abjured his errors the next day, and that his family, and young Lavaisse, had strangled him out of hatred to the catholic religion. A moment passed, and this was no longer doubted. The whole city was persuaded it was an article of religion, among pro-

testants, that parents should rather murder their children than suffer them to become catholics.

The Sieur David, Capitoul of Thoulouse, excited by these rumors, and wishing to shew his zeal, acted in a manner which neither law, precedent, nor practice could justify. The family of Calas, the Catholic servant-maid, and Lavaisse were sent to prison. Thirteen judges assembled every day to try the accused. There were eight voices against five, and the wretched Calas was condemned to be broken on the wheel, though it seemed impossible to conceive how an old man of sixty-eight, who had long been extremely infirm, and afflicted with a disorder in his legs, should have been able, alone, to strangle his son aged eighteen, and possessing more than common bodily strength.

The motive for passing this sentence was as inconceivable as all the rest of the proceedings. The judges, who had voted for the punishment of John Calas, persuaded the others that this infirm old man would not be able to resist his tortures, but would confess, under the hands of the executioner, his own crime, and that of his accomplices. They were confounded, when they found the venerable sufferer died on the wheel, calling God to witness his innocence, and beseeching him to pardon his judges.

They

They were obliged to issue a second arret, contrary to their former judgment, to set at liberty the mother, her son Peter, young Lavaiffe, and the servant-maid. But one of the counsellors convinced them, that this arret contradicted their former one, and condemned themselves, since the accused were altogether at the time of the supposed parricide, and to set at liberty the survivors was demonstratively to prove the innocence of the father, whom they had executed.

M. de Voltaire was the first who arose to combat oppression and unravel mystery. Struck with the impossibility of the crime imputed to Calas the father, he encouraged the widow to petition the King for justice. His pen, his labors, his fortune, and his credit were all employed in behalf of injured innocence. This sensibility did as much honor to his heart as ever did his writings to his understanding.

While this affair was in agitation, the Marshal de R * *, who happened to be at *Les Delices*, requested an account of it from M. de Voltaire, in presence of a numerous company. The author of the *Henriade* related every particular, with eloquence so forcible, and so affecting, that he drew tears from the Marshal and all present. M. de Voltaire then introduced one of the Calas', who was in an adjoining room, and the Marshal de R * *

spoke to him as follows : “ Sir, I am convinced
 “ your father was innocent, I feel most poig-
 “ nantly for your misfortunes; you may rely on
 “ my interest and support: since you no longer
 “ have a father to serve and protect you, it is be-
 “ come my duty.” Such actions, which would
 ennoble an obscure person, cannot but render the
 man of rank and fortune still more illustrious.

But let us return to the endeavors made by M.
 de Voltaire to repair, as much as in his power,
 the dreadful disasters of the family of Calas. His
 widow wept, in solitude, the loss of her husband
 and her son, and was only prevailed on by the
 sollicitations of some beneficent persons to throw
 herself at the King’s feet and implore his justice.
 She offered to prove that her husband had been
 unjustly condemned, and intreated the counsel to
 examine her cause with the utmost rigor, and in-
 flict on her the most severe punishment if she
 were guilty. The commissioners named by his
 Majesty examined the proceedings at Toulouse,
 and on Saturday, the ninth of March, 1765, forty-
 two judges unanimously declared the former ~~accu-~~
 void, and that Madame Calas, her family, and all
 who had been accused, were innocent, and rein-
 stated in their rights, with costs, damages, and
 interest. She left the palace amidst the acclama-
 tions

tions of her judges, and the surrounding spectators.

Louis XV, having been informed that the family of Calas had been declared innocent, did not confine himself to an act of fruitless and barren justice; he heaped his favors on the unfortunate widow and her son, and ordered them to be presented with 36,000 livres, (1500 pounds).

Another affair, of nearly the same nature, soon after engaged the attention of M. de Voltaire. In 1761, at the very time the protestant family of Calas was in prison, it happened that a daughter of the Sieur Paul Sirven, a Calvinist, *Commissaire a Terrier*, in the Pays de Castres, was shut up in a convent at Castres, called *La Maison des Regentes*. This young girl was much distressed at her situation; she lost her senses, and some time after threw herself into a well in the middle of a field, far from her father's house, and near a village named Mazamet.

The judge of that village directly issued his warrant against the father, the mother, and the ~~sisters~~ of the deceased. On this news Sirven assembled his friends; they all were certain of his innocence, but the fate of the family of Calas had filled the whole province with terror. They advised Sirven not to expose himself to the consequences of a bigotted prosecution. He fled with

his wife and daughters in the depth of winter. This unfortunate company were necessitated to traverse, on foot, mountains covered with snow. One of Sirven's daughters, who had been married but a year, brought forth her child, without assistance, in the midst of frost and snow, and, though half dead herself, was forced to carry her dying infant in her arms. At length, having arrived at a place of safety, the first news they heard was, that the father and mother had been condemned to death, the two sisters declared equally guilty, and banished, their goods confiscated, and that nothing remained for them in this world but disgrace and misery.

M. de Voltaire, to whom they applied in this wretched situation, assisted them as he had assisted the Calas. He addressed himself to all the sovereigns of Europe, who were willing to partake in the glory of protecting the family of Sirven. The King of Denmark, the Landgrave of Hesse, the Duchess of Saxe Gotha, the Princess of Nassau Saarbruck, the Margraves of Baden, and the Princess of Darmstadt, equally affected by the innocence and miseries of the Sirvens, hastened to bestow their several bounties. The King of Prussia immediately sent them a hundred crowns, and offered to receive and protect them in his dominions.

The King of Denmark made them a considerable present, the Empress of Russia did the same, and accompanied her gift with these words, written with her own hand, WOE TO PERSECUTORS.

The King of Poland, incited by what Madame de Geoffrin said, who was then at Warsaw, transmitted them a present worthy of himself, and Madame de Geoffrin set an example to the French, by following that of the King of Poland.

M. de Voltaire, employing to the best advantage these benefactions, gave the cause of Sirven into the hands of the ablest advocates in Paris, who had the generosity to refuse the money assigned them as their fees.

M. Elie de Beaumont, author of a Memoir, as eloquent as it was convincing, signalized himself by his disinterestedness, no less than by his oratory.

Sirven, conscious of the justice of his cause, addressed himself to the council, who referred him to the parliament of Toulouse, by which he was declared innocent. Thus the generosity of M. de Voltaire was not exerted without effect.

We must confess, to the praise of this poet, that from the time he resided in the neighbourhood of Geneva, he rarely neglected any opportunity of protecting or assisting the unfortunate; the following are some examples which, though

though not commonly known, are not therefore the less true.

The Jesuits, in the time of Father La Chaise, confessor to Louis XIV, had obtained the confiscation of some lands, the annual income of which was a hundred crowns, which lay contiguous to the estate of M. de Voltaire, and formerly belonged to a poor gentleman, in a village named Ornex. This donation had been made them for the maintenance of a missionary to convert the protestants. These lands became soon after, by other acquisitions, worth four or five thousand livres *per annum*.

About the year 1754, the Jesuits of Ornex were desirous of extending their possessions by purchasing the estate of some minors, which lay very convenient for the reverend fathers. This estate belonged to seven young gentlemen, officers in the army, who were brothers, and of small fortune. The Jesuits, at that time, were still in credit, and nobody expected the dissolution of their order would happen so suddenly. They obtained letters patent, from the council, to sell themselves of the estate of these minors.

This affair was nearly concluded, when an account of it reached M. de Voltaire. He determined to defend those whom the fathers were about to deprive of the lands of their ancestors.

He

He deposited the money in the town-house of Gex, and at length, after long litigation, the parliament of Dijon pronounced a decree in favor of these young officers; who, at present, are in possession of their estate, and bless the parliament and M. de Voltaire.

He has eminently signalized himself by his beneficence to his tenants. Having been informed that a worthy man, a tenant on his estate at Fernei, was in prison for 7500 livres, (312 pounds) he gave orders to pay the debt. It was objected that his tenant's whole wealth consisted in a numerous family, and that the money must be lost. "So much the better, replied M. de Voltaire, we never lose when we give alms, and, by giving, restore a father to his family, and an honest man to his country." If he actually lost this sum, it must be confessed he enjoyed what was far more affecting and delightful than all the splendor of the courts in which he had lived. He beheld the tears of tenderness and gratitude shed by an honest family, and received the benedictions of the people of Fernei, who no longer stiled him their lord, but their father.

This was also the epithet bestowed on him by Mademoiselle Corneille, who inherits one of the most celebrated names in literature. Jean François Corneille, the only male descendant, and son
of

of a cousin-german of the famous Peter Corneille, possessed nothing but his illustrious name. He came to Paris hoping to amend his wretched situation. The French comedians, on the tenth of March, 1760, acted *Rodogune* for his benefit, which produced him 5000 livres (208 pounds). Out of this he set apart a sum, to give his daughter, then seventeen years of age, an education suitable to her birth and promising genius. M. le Brun, Secretary to the Prince de Conti, wrote to M. de Voltaire in favor of this niece of the great Corneille.

“ I is but right (said M. de Voltaire in his answer) that an old soldier who has fought under the great Corneille, should endeavor to be friend the grand-daughter of his general; but when we are building castles and churches, and have poor relations to provide for, but little remains to assist, as we could wish, a person who ought only to be assisted by the greatest characters in the kingdom.

“ I am old: I have a niece who is fond of all the arts, and succeeds in several. If the person you mention, and with whom you are without doubt acquainted, will accept of a genteel education under my niece, she will treat her like her own daughter.”

M. de

M. de Voltaire kept his word. He married Mademoiselle Corneille advantageously to M. Dupui, a captain of cavalry, and gave her the profits of a new edition of her uncle's works, which he published in 1762, in twelve volumes, octavo.

The village of Fernei is much indebted to him for his embellishments of the parish church, on which, after having repaired it, he placed the inscription, *Deo erexit Voltaire*, 1762.

Another obligation which the Pays de Gex has to Voltaire, is, the great encouragement he gave to agriculture. "I have purposely chosen, says he, one of the worst pieces of ground in France, to build on, and cultivate the ungrateful soil, which cannot be ploughed but by the united strength of six oxen, and which, producing only three grains of corn for one, had been a constant burthen to every possessor. I determined to try if it were not possible, in some measure, to change Nature by labor and perseverance, and my attempts on this desert were not absolutely unsuccessful. A wretched hamlet, which scarcely consisted of fifty-five poor creatures, who experienced nothing but disease and misery in the extreme, is changed into a neat little village, by consequence more healthy, and contains already near three hundred inhabitants. A little piece of ground, more

“ more barren than the worst part of Cham-
 “ paigne, which, in derision, is called the *Loufy*,
 “ has produced harvests; and I have received
 “ ten for one, every year, from lands the pro-
 “ ducts of which never exceeded three, or per-
 “ haps two for one, in two years.”

It cannot be denied but a country is greatly benefited when rendered fertile. This benefit became still more perceptible when M. de Voltaire obtained, under the ministry of M. Turgot, letters of franchisement for the Pays de Gex. This little province became free. The extraordinary sales of salt and tobacco were suppressed, by letters patent, stipulating an indemnity to the King for this suppression. This indemnity was fixed at 30,000 livres, to be levied from all the lands within this slip of earth.

We have related the acts of benevolence and favors M. de Voltaire conferred on others, we now shall mention the honors and rewards he obtained for himself. M. de Voltaire having been introduced at the age of twelve into the best company of Paris, early enjoyed that respect and influence which is consequent on an intimacy with the great. His *Oedipus*, which piece had amazing success, introduced him into the principal families of France. As he was exceedingly thoughtless and wild in his youthful sallies, during one
 of

of the representations of this tragedy, he wantonly held up the train of the high priest, while the actor who performed the part was in one of the most tragic and interesting situations. The Lady of Marshal Villars, having enquired who it was that appeared so jocular, was informed it was the author. She directly sent for him into her box, and treated him with so much distinction that she inspired the young poet with a kind of passion.

He wrote many verses on her; the following, which he presented to her, with a copy of the *Henriade*, are still remembered.

Belov'd by you, by you inspir'd and charm'd !

Your beauties, erst, I sang, with grace and skill ;

Uprose this work while you my bosom warm'd ;

This work were perfect, had you lov'd me still !

Marshal Villars shewed him no less kindness than his Lady. He first introduced him to Marshal Richelieu, whose friendship and protection he retained during sixty years.

The Prince of Conti, father of him who is so celebrated for the actions of the Barricade of Demont and Chateau Dauphin, wrote some verses to him after the representation of his *Oedipus*, and always expressed the greatest friendship for him. M. de Voltaire one day said to him, " Mon-
" seigneur,

“ seigneur, you will become a great poet, and I
 “ must procure you a pension from the King.”

But what most raised Voltaire, in the opinion of the public, was the regular correspondance which took place, in 1735, between him and the Prince Royal of Prussia. That Prince, having mounted the throne, was desirous of seeing the man whose works he so much admired, and M. de Voltaire went to Berlin in 1740. Frederic loaded him with honors; presented him to the Queen, his mother, who admitted him to her table; and entertained him with a grand review, which was followed by a magnificent repast, consisting of more than sixty covers, at which the French poet was placed by the side of the Marquis de Vatori, minister from the court of France. On his return the King gave him a letter of recommendation to the Princess of Brunswick, his sister, conceived in terms expressive of the greatest esteem.

What Frederic afterwards did to engage him to reside at Berlin, in 1750, has been already mentioned, and is well known. Received every where with so much distinction, living with an illustrious Monarch, we may say, on terms of the most familiar intimacy, sought after by the Great, and enjoying freedom, even in a court, he continued in uninterrupted possession of these high favors,
 till

till his quarrel with Maupertuis. He had alone permission to be served from the King's table, and when the marriage of Prince Henry with the Princess of Hesse Cassel was celebrated, Voltaire had the honor to dine with the Royal Family.

Even after his disgrace, the Margraves of Ba-teith honored him with the most flattering marks of her friendship. That Princess was goodness itself. She it was who, in 1758, reconciled Voltaire to the King of Prussia, her brother. That Prince continued afterwards to write letters to him, full of gaiety, wit, and philosophy; and erected his statue in his beautiful manufactory of Porcelain, with an inscription most proper to flatter his vanity.

The Empress of Russia, no less attentive to pay her court to a writer whom Fame had made her interpreter, bought watches to the amount of 50000 livres, from the manufactories Voltaire had established at Fernei.

She sent Prince Kouloski to him, to present him with some magnificent pelisses, and a box turned by her own hands, ornamented with her portrait, and twenty diamonds. One would have imagined, said Voltaire of himself, one was reading the History of Aboulcassim, in the Arabian Nights Entertainment.

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This

This Princess, the King of Prussia, and several other sovereign Princes, who had honored Voltaire with their visits, or their correspondence, subscribed towards a statue, which was erected in 1770, by several of the literati of Paris, and to which J. J. Rousseau himself also contributed : a noble revenge for all the injuries he had suffered from the philosopher of Fernei.

If Voltaire appeared less in favor at the court of France than in other foreign courts, he nevertheless possessed great influence there ; especially during the ministry of Bellisle and Choiseul, The Marchioness of Pompadour always patronized him, she procured him the place of Gentleman in Ordinary, and his title of Historiographer of France. The rewards he afterwards obtained would have been much more considerable, had he respected what every good citizen ought to respect, religion and morality ; but Louis XV, justly incensed against him for the dangerous works which continually issued from his retirement, thought he should injure Christianity if he appeared to favor one who openly avowed himself its enemy. He frequently expressed his displeasure so as to alarm him, but the menaces he sometimes uttered, that he would have him imprisoned, continually ceded to the solicitations
of

of Voltaire's protectors, and the natural good disposition of that monarch.

Before we proceed to the last Transactions of his Life, we shall give a brief Account of his Disputes with various Booksellers, and of the Origin of his great Wealth..

M. DE VOLTAIRE, perceiving that booksellers grew great on the labors of authors, early resolved to free himself from their yoke. He began by printing his works at his own expence, by which means he received all the profits of his labors; but he did not reflect, that the booksellers, jealous of the gains he made, would oppose him all in their power. This was soon the case; and from the year 1730, M. de Voltaire has been continually embroiled with booksellers, and persons they have employed. His first dispute, and that which made the most noise, was with Francis Jore, a bookseller of Rouen in Normandy.

In 1731, M. de Voltaire resided seven months in Jore's house, in the disguise of an English nobleman. After having passed some time in the city, he went into the country to re-establish his health, where he lived after the manner of the golden age, on vegetables, new laid eggs, and milk.

M. de Voltaire soon after departed for Paris, making the most grateful acknowledgments to his host, and assuring him he would soon set his press to work.

After his arrival in the capital, he wrote to Jore to come to him, on an affair of great importance. The bookseller obeyed, and repaired to the house of Madame de Fontaine Martel, with whom M. de Voltaire resided.

The important business, he then had in hand, was the publication of the Philosophical Letters, for which, he said, he had a verbal permission. No sooner had this book appeared, than it raised a disagreeable clamour against the author, but Voltaire found an excellent expedient to extricate himself from the difficulty. Jore was at law with Ferrand, a printer at Rouen, for having pirated one of his books, for which he had a privilege. M. de Voltaire therefore advised Jore to privately give the manuscript of this work to Ferrand. He cannot fail, said he, to fall into the snare and print it; the edition will immediately be seized, and our superiors, informed that the manuscript was stolen from me, will not make me responsible for the other editions which may hereafter appear. By this means I shall be able to publish it without danger, and we shall both be safe.

A copy

A copy of the edition of Jore, lent to M. de Voltaire, served to reprint from; the whole edition of the bookseller of Rouen, Jore, was seized, and himself deprived of his freedom; by arret of council, in September, 1734. Reduced to poverty, he applied to M. de Voltaire to pay him for printing his book. That poet, to save himself from any prosecution, had written two letters to the magistrate who superintended all new publications, in which he accused Jore of having published the edition, notwithstanding he had offered to make him any indemnification.

He received the bookseller with great coolness and indifference; at length, after several negotiations, he proposed to pay half the debt. To this Jore, since he found he could obtain nothing better, agreed. The illustrious poet advanced him a hundred pistoles, and denied that any more was his due, though he ought to have paid a hundred and forty. It was on this occasion that this bookseller published his famous Memoir, in which he accused Voltaire of so many unjust practices, with regard to the sale of his works.

This Memoir, slanderous either in whole or in part, represented M. de Voltaire in colours too odious for him not to endeavor to procure its suppression. In this he succeeded, but not till he had satisfied the bookseller, who promised to

write a letter by way of reparation. This letter, full of deference, respect, and repentance, effaced, in part, the impression made by the facts which had been advanced in the *Memoir*, relative to the manner in which M. de Voltaire disposed of manuscripts.

I cannot but own I very much approve of what M. de Voltaire has said of the right every author has to derive a reasonable profit from his labor, which is as much his due as the rent of an estate is due to its owner; he may even write for a livelihood, *ingenii largitor venter*, but his writings ought not to appear dictated by necessity. Enterprizing poverty made Horace a poet; yet, in all his works, he is plainly inspired by the love of glory. An author may also sell his works. Cicero sold his pleadings. You have sold my Oration for Ligarius extremely well, said he, in an epistle to Atticus. Pope Benedict XIV, in his youth, sold several Treatises in Divinity to the booksellers of Venice. Many *literati* have a ridiculous delicacy on this head; after having subsisted on their productions, they obtain a pension, and are ashamed of every thing that resembles commerce.

A foreign ambassador having at his table a philosopher of Geneva, who maintained himself by his literary labors, as a number of court sycophants do by their servility, and speaking of a
man

man of the first genius, he writes for his bread, said the ambassador, contemptuously. And for what does your Excellency cypher and decypher, retorted the blunt citizen of Geneva? Why, to give a good dinner to your equals.

M. de Voltaire had an undoubted right to sell his manuscripts; but the present question is, whether he sold them too often, or to several booksellers at the same time. He appears on this head to have been unjustly accused*. Different booksellers

* Note by a Bookseller.

M. de Voltaire had adopted a practice in the sale of his manuscripts which, I believe, the booksellers of Paris will not easily be brought to approve. "You say, writes he, in a letter to the Abbé Mouffinot, that Prault is dissatisfied: at which I am surprized; he must know the printing of foreign editions cannot be prevented. When I wish to favor a bookseller in Holland, I inform him of any work I may happen to have in the press in France, and endeavor to procure him the first copy, that he may get the start of his brethren in the publication; and therefore have I promised a Dutch bookseller immediately to send him a copy of the work in question."

Voltaire acted in conformity to these principles; for we have two letters of his, dated at Brussels, in 1740, in one of which he proposes the manuscript of the Anti-Machiavel to Prault, at Paris, and in the other to Van Duren, at the Hague.

"My dear friend, I am going to trust you with a secret. M. de Chambonin will deliver you a packet, which will be soon followed by another. The whole is a very singular

bookfellers have certainly published his works, but it is not true, that he *always* derived profit from these editions. Since the brothers of the name of

“ manuscript, written by a still more singular man. It is, as
 “ you will see, a refutation of Machiavel, and by an author of
 “ the most elevated rank, whose very name, when known, will
 “ make the fortune of his bookfeller. You may make an agree-
 “ ment with Prault, the Son, but you must not take less than a
 “ thousand crowns; the tenth part of which, if you please,
 “ shall be for yourself. I, for my part, have no share either
 “ in the manuscript or the profits, &c. &c.” (*Letter to the*
Abbé Mouffinet.)

We will now cite what he wrote on the same subject to the bookfeller at the Hague.

“ I have by me a very singular manuscript, written by one
 “ of the most considerable men in Europe. It is a kind of re-
 “ futation of Machiavel's Prince. The work is full of interest-
 “ ing facts and bold reflexions, which cannot but engage the
 “ curiosity of the reader, and insure the profit of the bookfeller.
 “ I am authorised to make a few corrections, and have it print-
 “ ed. I will send you a printed copy in my possession, provided
 “ you will engage to have it transcribed, and return me the
 “ manuscript. I shall add a preface, and only require of you
 “ to print it well, and send two dozen copies, magnificently
 “ bound, to that German court which I shall indicate, &c.”

Brussels, June 5, 1740.

Thus the bookfeller at the Hague, was to pay nothing for the same work, for which the bookfeller at Paris was to give a thousand crowns. Yet, Voltaire declares, he had no share in the profits; can it be supposed they were claimed by the King of Prussia? These two letters are not easily reconciled to a strict regard to probity.

Cramer

Cramer became his publishers, we have heard of no dispute of his with any bookseller whatever. Perhaps, indeed, it had been as well if M. de Voltaire, or his editors, had not made the public purchase the same things three or four times over. Five or six little pieces of his appeared every year, which, at the end of that year, were collected together under the title of *Miscellanies*. These *Miscellanies* were again published in the *Questions* on the *Encyclopedia*, and these tiresome repetitions offended and wearied the public. It is also to be remarked, that in the works which were published as new ones, there were a hundred things which M. de Voltaire had said and re-said, even thirty or forty times. If this was the privilege of old age, as he alledged, he ought at least to have contrived, that his privilege should have been less expensive to the public.

We forgot, under the article of M. de Voltaire's typographical quarrels, to speak of those which he had with some booksellers in Holland. Ledet, of Amsterdam, affirmed he sold him the right of printing his works, and afterwards sold the same right to others. Voltaire, on the contrary, pretended he had received nothing either from him or any one else. Vanduren, bookseller at the Hague, who had received from him a copy of the *Anti-Machiavel*, complains, likewise, that
after

after having given him the copy, he had decried his edition, purposely to bring out another for his own profit: but these accusations have not been sufficiently proved, nor are we in possession of sufficient materials to determine the truth.

Certain it is, however, that the resentment of the booksellers burst forth in a very violent manner in the year 1748. They then published the *Voltaireana*, a collection of all the most abusive pieces that had appeared against M. de Voltaire. They had even the audacity to send a copy, post, to the court of King Stanislaus, where Voltaire then was; but that Prince, highly offended, threw the libel in the fire.

It cannot, however, be denied, that M. de Voltaire is the first writer who ever acquired a great fortune without filling any of those posts which usually lead to wealth and honors. Order, economy, the favor he was in with the Great, and his connections with several rich financiers, were the real sources of his opulence.

He inherited a patrimony of a hundred thousand livres (above four thousand pounds) with which he bought a life annuity, and thus nearly doubled his income. His brother, the Treasurer of the Chamber of Accounts, dying in 1741, he succeeded to the greater part of what he possessed. Thus, independent of any other acquisitions,
he

he possessed, by inheritance, a very considerable fortune.

The subscription for the *Henriade*, published at London in 1726, produced him fifty thousand crowns (6,250 pounds) which he laid out in a lottery established by M. des Forts, Comptroller General of the Finances; the tickets of this lottery were to be paid for in ready money, and the prizes were to consist of annuities; in such a manner that any society which should have bought all the tickets, would have gained a million of livres. Voltaire joined a numerous club, and proved fortunate.

He afterwards obtained a share in a contract to furnish the army with provisions, during the war in Italy, in 1733, which brought him seven hundred thousand livres (near thirty thousand pounds) and with which he likewise purchased annuities. To this M. Marchand alludes, when he says, M. de Voltaire had found means to keep himself from starving, by undertaking to furnish others with food.

He enjoyed pensions from several Sovereigns; one of twelve hundred livres (fifty pounds a year) from the Queen of France; another from the King, without including his salary as Historiographer of France,

The

The King of Prussia, when he went to Berlin, gave him a yearly pension of twenty-three thousand livres (nine hundred and fifty pounds.) When he left the dominions of that Prince, in 1753, he lodged five hundred thousand livres (above twenty thousand pounds) in the hands of M. Tronchin, a banker at Lyons, the fruits of his Majesty's generosity, and the profits he had made by his writings in Prussia and elsewhere.

He was secretly concerned in several branches of commerce. He had a share in a rich house at Cadiz, which was very successful, and was concerned with several booksellers, in different publications. He was connected with M. de Molin in the corn trade, and the Abbé Mouffinot in the sale of pictures. He advised all his brethren of the pen not to cultivate literature alone, but use their endeavors to effect a union between Plutus and Apollo: and continually told the state reformers, who abound in the coffee-houses of Paris, that a commercial scheme, which procured the speculator all the conveniences of life, was infinitely superior to a political one.

What contributed very much to augment M. de Voltaire's fortune, was his living so long without keeping house: and that afterwards, when he did keep one, he seldom expended above a third of his income, and sometimes not so much.

All

All his domestics, latterly, consisted only of an amanuensis, a woman who waited on him, a cook-maid, two lackeys, one of whom served him for coachman, and Father Adam, who was overseer of the poultry. He indeed employed a great number of workmen about his grounds, and some of them occasionally served within doors.

Though M. de Voltaire made large profits, he likewise met with no inconsiderable losses. He lost by the bankruptcy of the Jew, Medina, at London, forty thousand livres (above sixteen hundred pounds;) and by M. de Molin, whom we mentioned before, twenty-four thousand (a thousand pounds.) He also lost a very capital sum by M. Michel, Receiver General of the Finances.

On this latter loss, he wrote as follows to the Abbé Mouffinot, " I confess I did not foresee
 " this bankruptcy, not conceiving such an accident could possibly befall a Receiver General
 " of the Finances to his most Christian Majesty.
 " You will find, however, that his children will be
 " very rich, and preferred to lucrative posts. The
 " President of the Grand Council will sit in judgment on me, if I should happen to have a cause
 " come before his august tribunal. His brother,
 " the Intendant of the King's Amusements, shall
 " have it in his power to prevent my pieces being
 " played at Versailles; while I, half poet, half
 " philosopher,

“ philosopher, must rest contented with the loss
 “ of my money, without judging any man, or en-
 “ joying any place.”

Every loss M. de Voltaire suffered, gave him an opportunity of pressing his debtors. With people of an inferior class, he had at once recourse to the bailiff, while, to the Great, he behaved with a kind of respectful pleasantry. “ You tell
 “ me, says he, in a letter to the Prince de Guise,
 “ that you have always paid M. Crozat with great
 “ punctuality. This to me is a cruel distinction.
 “ M. Crozat, who has a hundred thousand crowns
 “ a year, is paid exactly to the day ; while I,
 “ because I am not rich, must remain four years
 “ in arrears. Alas ! Monseigneur, I do not re-
 “ quest those regular payments you make to
 “ *Cæsus Crozat*, I only beg you would not en-
 “ tirely forget that something is owing to *Irus*
 “ Voltaire.”

The Order of our Work now conducts us to the last Stage of M. de VOLTAIRE's Life ; to relate the Occasion of his return to Paris ; the Respect shewn him there ; his Profession of Faith ; and his Death and Burial.

THOUGH Voltaire celebrated the happiness he enjoyed at Fernei both in prose and verse, he certainly sometimes was tired of his solitude, since he undertook, at the age of eighty-four, and in the

the depth of winter, to make a journey to Paris. The general opinion was, that he continued to reside at the foot of the Alps against his will; and this opinion hurt him the more, because his enemies frequently spoke of him as an exile, and travellers who visited him, when disgusted with some little pettishness, would frequently dare to remind him of these reports.

Thus, it is said, that having once asked a person, who continued longer at Fernei than was consistent with the laws of hospitality, *When he intended to depart for Paris.* Sir, answered his guest, *I can depart for Paris whenever I please.* Some people, however, contest the truth of this anecdote, and assert it took its rise from Voltaire's having said of a traveller, who made too long a stay with him, *Don Quixote took inns for castles; but Mr. * * takes castles for inns.* Whether these stories are true or false, the enemies of Voltaire frequently upbraided him with his supposed exile, and affirmed, he only pretended to be fond of a retreat, of which he was an inhabitant by constraint.

To increase these mortifications, the Emperor had passed by his door, and never honored him with a visit. Voltaire had flattered himself he should receive this mark of distinction. He long waited for him in his vestibulum, with his robe
de

de chambre, and habited as he usually was when he expected to be visited by the Great. His advanced age, his ill state of health, whether feigned or real, and his great abilities seemed to excuse the familiarities in which he indulged himself on such occasions.

Voltaire was the more mortified at being thus disdained, as we may say, by this illustrious Monarch, because, when at Geneva, the Emperor had visited several of the learned men in that city. From that time his whole endeavors were bent once more to return to Paris, for which city he departed the beginning of February, 1778, and he arrived there on the tenth of the same month. His first care was to fulfil the duties of friendship, he went on foot to visit the Comte d'Argental, who, for fifty successive years, had done his utmost to promote his glory, and protect his person. He was, said Voltaire, born to increase the harmony of souls, as was Rameau the harmony of sounds.

The eagerness to see him was general. It became a kind of epidemic phrenzy. His chamber resembled the levee of a minister of state. Some did not so much as tell their names, others were satisfied with being in his company, merely that they might repeat among his admirers, *I have seen! I have heard!* The enthusiasm of his partisans

fans was compared by the writer of a journal to that with which the Dalay-Lama inspires his adorers. Every trifling pleasantry was carefully collected. Voltaire uttered many that were excellent, but the constraint put on him, by the desire and necessity of being always witty, rendered his manner far from natural, in the eyes of people of rank, whose conversation, at once simple and poignant, is always distinguished by an elevated familiarity.

Voltaire, however, liberally complimented all his complimenters. He told the comedians, 'Hereafter I shall only live for you, and by you.' To some, he said, they had first taught him to be vain; to others, they had given him a more lively sensation of gratitude. One had celebrated him like Horace; another, was a second Ovid. But the actors and actresses were the principal objects of his attention.

One of the motives for his journey was, to have his tragedy of Irene represented. This piece he had lately composed, or retouched, for it is pretended it had been written ten years. He was ardent to prove, by this work, which contains some beautiful verses, that age had not diminished his poetic fire. He wholly employed himself in declaiming with and instructing the actors who were to perform in his piece, and he did this with so much exertion that he vomited blood. An

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accident

accident so alarming, to a man of his years, gave birth to difficulties which had not perhaps been foreseen. It was thought necessary to call in the ministers of religion to his aid. The Abbé Gaultier, an Ex-Jesuit, came unmasked, and with the more confidence, because he had made a convert of a famous epicurean.

The following relation is in the Abbé's own words.

An exact Copy of the Memoir which the Abbé Gaultier presented to the Archbishop of Paris, containing the particulars of the Death of M. DE VOLTAIRE.

“ YOUR Grace has desired a faithful relation of
 “ all that passed between me and M. de Voltaire,
 “ from his arrival in Paris till his death. As no
 “ one is better able to gratify this wish than my-
 “ self, I shall endeavor to supply the informa-
 “ tion your Grace is pleased to request.

“ Monsieur de Voltaire arrived at Paris the
 “ beginning of February 1778, and took up his
 “ residence at the Marquis de Villette's, on the
 “ Quai des Theatins. Vast multitudes crowded
 “ to see this celebrated man. Nothing was talked
 “ of in Paris but M. de Voltaire. Eulogiums
 “ were writtten on him in prose and in verse. I
 “ cannot

“ cannot but confess it gave me great pain to
 “ see a man so honored, and almost adored, whose
 “ abilities had been employed to blaspheme reli-
 “ gion and destroy every moral obligation. My
 “ uneasiness increased when I considered how
 “ much it was to be feared that a person so dan-
 “ gerous should, by his presence, give new vigor
 “ to infidelity. I prayed the Omnipotent to pre-
 “ vent the mischief this patriarch of infidels might
 “ cause in the capital, and at last determined to
 “ write to this scourge of his country, which I
 “ did, in the following terms.

LETTER from the Abbé GAULTIER
 to M. DE VOLTAIRE.

“ SIR,

“ You have many admirers, and, should your
 “ wishes fortunately meet mine, I may, as I
 “ most ardently desire to be, become one
 “ of the number. I will explain myself more
 “ fully, if you will grant me a moment’s conver-
 “ sation. I am one of the most unworthy of
 “ the ministers of Christ, but I shall say nothing
 “ unbecoming my profession, or which ought not
 “ to give you pleasure. Though I do not flat-
 “ ter myself you will indulge me in what I
 “ should esteem so great a happiness, I shall

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“ not

“ not fail to remember you, when I celebrate the
 “ most holy sacrifice of the mass. I shall fervently
 “ pray to the just and merciful God for the salvation
 “ of your immortal soul, which perhaps is on the very
 “ point of rendering an account of all its actions. Pardon
 “ me, Sir, for the liberty I have taken; my intention is to
 “ render you the greatest of all services, which I may
 “ do, by the assistance of him who has ordained that
 “ weak things shall confound the strong. How happy
 “ should I esteem myself, if your answer should prove
 “ analogous to the sentiments with which I remain, &c.

“ Signed, GAULTIER,
 “ Priest.

Paris, Feb. 20, 1778.

“ M. DE VOLTAIRE'S Answer.

“ Your letter, Sir, appears to me that of an
 “ honest man, which is sufficient to determine
 “ me to receive the honor of your visit, on the
 “ day and hour most agreeable to yourself. I shall
 “ address you in the same language which I used
 “ when I gave my benediction to the grandson
 “ of the sage and illustrious Franklin, the most
 “ respectable man of America; I uttered only
 “ these words, *God and liberty*. All who were
 present

“ present shed tears ; I flatter myself your prin-
 “ ciples are the same. I am eighty-four years
 “ of age, and must soon appear before God, the
 “ Creator of all worlds. If you have any thing
 “ to communicate, I shall consider it as my duty
 “ and an honor to pay you every attention, notwith-
 “ standing the bodily pains under which I suffer.

“ I have the honor to be, &c.

“ Signed, DE VOLTAIRE.”

Paris, Feb. 21, 1778.

“ The same day, that is, the 21st of February, I
 “ paid a visit to M. de Voltaire. There was a great
 “ number of persons in the chamber of audience,
 “ waiting to speak to him ; he spent, however, but
 “ two or three minutes with them, alledging that
 “ he was in excessive pain, and not in a condition to
 “ see any body. As he retired, he took me by the
 “ hand, and desired me to follow him. He led me
 “ into his chamber, made me sit down by him, and
 “ asked me, what it was I wished to say. I returned
 “ him my answer nearly in the following words :

“ The desire of knowing the most celebrated
 “ man of this age has occasioned my taking the
 “ liberty to write to you ; I have not the honor
 “ of a personal acquaintance with you, but I
 “ am extremely intimate with a friend of yours,

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M. de

“ M. de Lattaignant, and I dare flatter myself I
 “ possess his confidence. His infirmities, and his
 “ great age, have led him to make those reflections
 “ which every thinking person ought to
 “ make, when he prepares himself to appear before
 “ God, and which I have no doubt you have
 “ frequently made yourself. If my ministry may
 “ prove agreeable to you, you have only to speak,
 “ and I will conform myself to your wishes ; I
 “ am not the only one in Paris who can render
 “ you this service ; you may, doubtless, find ministers
 “ much more worthy than myself.

“ He heard me with great attention, and as
 “ soon as I had ended, asked me, whether what
 “ I had done originated entirely with myself. I
 “ replied, yes, which was really the truth. Are
 “ you not sent, said he, by the Archbishop, or
 “ the Curate of St. Sulpice. No, I assure you, said
 “ I ; should my proceeding be disagreeable to you,
 “ I have no doubt of your indulgence ; if, on
 “ the contrary, you approve of it, the Lord be
 “ praised. He said, he was very glad to hear
 “ I did not act under any other person’s directions,
 “ and asked me, what I had been, and
 “ who I was. I told him, I had been a Jesuit
 “ during seventeen, and curate of St. Marc,
 “ in the diocese of Rouen, for near twenty years ;
 “ that, at present, I was employed in ministerial
 “ func-

“ functions at Paris, and celebrated mass every
 “ day at the Hospital for Incurables*.

“ M. de Voltaire made me several offers of his
 “ services, but as I thought much less of the
 “ transitory rewards of this world, than that eter-
 “ nal recompence which God has prepared for
 “ his elect, I said to him, ah, Sir, how well
 “ should I esteem myself rewarded by your con-
 “ version; the merciful God desires not your de-
 “ struction, return therefore to him, since he is
 “ willing to return to you. M. de Voltaire,
 “ apparently affected by these words, said he
 “ loved God. I replied, that was a great
 “ thing, but that it was necessary it should pro-
 “ duce some fruits, for inactive love could
 “ never be the true love of that God who is the
 “ principle of action.

* The titles of Chaplain of the Incurables, and Confessor to the Abbé Lattaignant and M. de Voltaire, which have been bestowed on the Abbé Gaultier, gave birth to the following epigram.

Voltaire and Lattaignant, both of a trade,
 To one confessor, one confession made;
 Of two such penitents it can't avail,
 Who the confessor was, or what their tale;
 And yet had Gaultier an undoubted claim
 To these high honors, this unhop'd for fame;
 The cure of two such souls belongs, we own,
 To Chaplains of Incurables alone.

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“ M. de

“ M. de Voltaire said several other things,
 “ which I answered in such a manner as appear-
 “ ed satisfactory. Our conversation was inter-
 “ rupted by three different persons. Mr. Abbé,
 “ said the first, let me beg you to conclude what
 “ you have to say; you see M. de Voltaire vomits
 “ blood, and is unable to speak any longer. M.
 “ de Voltaire replied, with vivacity, *Sir, let me*
 “ *request you will not deprive me of the Abbé's company,*
 “ *he is my friend, and does not flatter me.* About
 “ three quarters of an hour afterwards Madame
 “ Denis came, and said to me, with great mild-
 “ nefs, Mr. Abbé, let me intreat you to leave
 “ what you have farther to say till another op-
 “ portunity, my uncle must be much fatigued.

“ I then took my leave, after asking permif-
 “ sion to call and see him occasionally, which he
 “ very readily granted. I assured him, that I
 “ should remember him every day in the sacri-
 “ fice of the mass. He thanked me, and ap-
 “ peared very much affected. Adieu, M. de Vol-
 “ taire, said I, as I left him, be certain you
 “ have not in the world a better friend than my-
 “ self,

“ I directly went to give an account of what
 “ had passed to the Curate of St. Sulpice, and also
 “ to the Abbé de l'Ecluse, Vicar General to your
 “ Grace. I told them, that it was probable M.
 “ de

“ de Voltaire would have recourse to my ministry,
 “ and desired instructions how to act in that case.
 “ They gave me their advice, to which I have
 “ strictly conformed. After which I incessantly
 “ employed myself in praying, and procuring
 “ the prayers of others, for the conversion of M.
 “ de Voltaire.

“ The 26th of February, I was agreeably sur-
 “ prized to receive a note from M. de Voltaire,
 “ in the following terms :

“ You promised me, Sir, to come and converse
 “ with me. You will greatly oblige me by taking
 “ that trouble as soon as possible. Signed, Vol-
 “ taire, at Paris, February 26, 1778.

“ I received this note about nine in the even-
 “ ing, and another the next morning, from Ma-
 “ dame Denis, of which the following is a copy :

“ Madame Denis, niece to M. de Voltaire,
 “ presents her compliments to the Abbé Gaultier,
 “ and would be much obliged to him if he would
 “ call on her uncle,

“ February 27, 1778. At the house
 “ of the Marquis de Villette.

“ On the 27th of February, as soon as I had
 “ celebrated mass, I went to the Marquis de Vil-
 “ lette's,

" lette's, to see M. de Voltaire ; on that day I had
 " only an opportunity to speak to Madame Denis,
 " who told me, that the Curate of St. Sulpice
 " had been to advise M. de Voltaire not to
 " defer confession, and that he had answered he
 " committed himself entirely to me. After this
 " visit, I went to give an account of what I had
 " done to the Curate of St. Sulpice.

" On the Second of March, 1778, I again vi-
 " sited M. de Voltaire, who was then attacked
 " with a vomiting of blood. Before I entered
 " his chamber, I was advised not to terrify him,
 " but speak to him with mildness. Marechal de
 " Richelieu, who had just left him, charged me
 " not to neglect my duty towards him, and I pro-
 " mised I would administer every spiritual assist-
 " ance in my power. I then went into M. de
 " Voltaire's apartment : he took me by the hand,
 " and requested me to confess him before he died.
 " I replied, I would willingly hear his confession,
 " and that I had spoken of it to the Curate of St.
 " Sulpice, whose parishioner he was, who had
 " granted me his permission ; but that he must
 " first make a recantation of his errors. I will im-
 " mediately write one, Sir, answered he, with
 " my own hand, which shall give you perfect
 " satisfaction ; bring me pen, ink, and paper,
 " and let me be left alone with my good
 " friend

“ friend the Abbé Gaultier. He was accordingly
 “ obeyed, every body retired, and he immediately
 “ ly wrote the following :

“ *I, the underwritten, declare, that having been at-*
 “ *tacked during four months with a vomiting of blood,*
 “ *at the age of eighty-four, and unable to drag myself to*
 “ *church, the Curate of St. Sulpice has added, to his other*
 “ *good actions, that of sending to me the Abbé Gaultier,*
 “ *a priest, to whom I have confessed myself, trusting,*
 “ *should God take me under his protection, I shall die*
 “ *in the Catholic faith, in which I was born, and pray-*
 “ *ing the divine mercy to pardon all my errors : and if*
 “ *I have ever brought a reproach upon religion, I ask*
 “ *pardon of God and the church. Signed, Voltaire,*
 “ *March 2, 1778, in the house of the Marquis de Vil-*
 “ *lette, in presence of the Abbé Mignot, my nephew,*
 “ *and the Marquis de Villeville, my friend.*

“ M. de Voltaire then begged me to call in the
 “ Abbé Mignot, and the Marquis de Villeville,
 “ to hear this paper read and signed, which they
 “ accordingly did. He likewise wrote with his
 “ own hand as follows :

“ *Having been informed, by the Abbé Gaultier, it has*
 “ *been asserted, in a certain society, that I had protested*
 “ *against whatever I might do at my death, I hereby de-*
 “ *clare I never made use of any such expression, and*
 “ *that*

“ *that it is an old piece of pleasantry, falsely ascribed*
 “ *long ago to many learned men, who were more enlight-*
 “ *ened than Voltaire.*

“ M. de Voltaire, when he gave me this re-
 “ tractation, said, in the presence of the Abbé Mig-
 “ not and Villevieille : you, no doubt, intend, Mr.
 “ Abbé, immediately to insert it in the journals :
 “ I have no objection. I replied, that it was not yet
 “ time. He then asked me, whether I was satis-
 “ fied ? I told him, that this retractation did not
 “ appear to me sufficiently ample, but that I
 “ would communicate it to your Grace, which I
 “ did, but which you likewise did not think suf-
 “ ficient. I left a copy of it at your Grace’s cha-
 “ teau de Conflans, where you then were.

“ I also went to the Curate of St. Sulpice, to
 “ let him know how I had proceeded, and left
 “ him a copy of this retractation, which he did
 “ not think satisfactory. At the same time I gave
 “ him a note from M. de Voltaire, in which he
 “ promised him six hundred livres for the poor of
 “ his parish.*

* The Abbé Gaultier having been informed the partizans of Voltaire had reported, that he had appropriated, to his own use, the six hundred livres which M. de Voltaire had remitted him for the poor of the parish of St. Sulpice, has inserted, in his Me-

moir,

“ On the next day, the third of March, I re-
 “ turned to M. de Voltaire, to engage him to make
 “ a retractation less equivocal and more circum-
 “ stantial;* but the porter told me, I could not

voir, an acknowledgment for the receipt of the money given
 by the Curate of the said parish, which is as follows : *I hereby*
certify, that the Abbé Gaultier, priest, remitted to me, during
the first illness of M. de Voltaire, a codicil to the will of the
said Sieur Voltaire, in his own hand writing, by which he
bequeaths, to the poor of my parish, the sum of six hundred
livres. Witness my hand,

“ DE TERSSAC, Curate of St. Sulpice.”

Paris, Sept. 10, 1778.

* The profession of faith, made by M. de Voltaire, being
 thought insufficient, the thing in agitation was to procure a
 better, and this was what the Curate of St. Sulpice had in view,
 in requesting to see M. de Voltaire, who, lodging in his parish,
 had become one of his flock : but he chose to elude every kind
 of explanation with his pastor. He wrote to him on the fourth
 of March, as follows :

“ REVEREND SIR,

“ THE Marquis de la Villette has assured me, that if I had
 “ taken the liberty to address myself immediately to you, with
 “ regard to the necessary step I have taken, you would have
 “ had the goodness to leave the important occupations in which
 “ you are engaged, to fulfil towards me those functions I thought
 “ only suitable to subalterns, considering I was a stranger, and
 “ residing but for a time within your parish. The Abbé Gaul-
 “ tier wrote to me as soon as he heard of my illness ; he af-
 “ terwards came to offer me his services, and I was led to be-
 “ lieve, that, being a resident of your parish, it might be by
 “ your

“ see him. I plainly perceived with whom these
 “ orders originated, for when I left M. de Vol-
 “ taire, on the evening before, Messieurs D’Ale-
 “ bert, Diderot and Marmontel, very openly tes-
 “ tified their dissatisfaction at my presence. After
 “ having returned several times to no purpose,
 “ I wrote the following letter to M. de Voltaire :

“ your desire. I consider you, Sir, as a person of the highest
 “ consequence in the state. I well know you are an apostle to
 “ the poor, you comfort them, and labour in your vocation
 “ for their benefit. The greater esteem I feel for your cha-
 “ racter, the more fearful am I to abuse your kindness. I re-
 “ member the respect due to your birth, your merit, and your
 “ function as a minister. You are a general, I request only a
 “ foldier. I hope you will forgive my not having foreseen
 “ that condescension which could induce you to descend even to
 “ me : pardon me, likewise, for having troubled you with this
 “ letter. It will not be necessary for you to take the pains to
 “ answer it, your time is too precious.

“ I have the honor to be, &c.”

All these compliments shew the new convert to have dreaded a visit from his curate, and that he was convinced his faith was not sufficiently established to undergo any rigorous examination.

The Curate of St. Sulpice returned the same day a very respect-ful answer, but which produced no change in M. de Voltaire’s manner of thinking ; he at first feared that the government would oblige him to return immediately to Fernei ; he endeavored to appease those whom his stay at Paris alarmed, but, as soon as he thought himself out of danger, he refused them admittance.

“ SIR,

“ SIR,

“ I wish much to hear from you. I have
 “ called frequently at your hôtel, but without
 “ effect. I have always been told, you were not
 “ to be spoken with. I wish nothing so much as
 “ the re-establishment of your health. I never
 “ fail to pray, when I celebrate the holy sacrifice
 “ of the mass, that God, of his goodness, would
 “ bestow on you many happy days. Be assured,
 “ Sir, no one can feel more sincere or more ar-
 “ dent wishes for your welfare. If you will per-
 “ mit me to revisit you, I will, then, amply ex-
 “ plain what I cannot express in this letter, which,
 “ believe me, is dictated from the heart, and
 “ not from the head.

“ I have the honor to be, &c.

“ Signed, GAULTIER.

Paris, March 13, 1778.

“ M. de Voltaire answered this letter by the
 “ following note :

“ The master of the house has ordered the porter
 “ not to admit any ecclesiastic, except the curate
 “ of St. Sulpice. When the patient shall have
 “ better recovered his health, he will take a plea-
 “ sure in receiving a visit from the Abbé Gaultier.

“ Signed, DE VOLTAIRE.

“ Paris, March 15, 1778.

“ A week

“ A week after this I went to enquire concerning
 “ his health ; the porter answered, I could by no
 “ means speak to him. I was informed, how-
 “ ever, that he was much better, and I wrote to
 “ him in the following words :

“ S I R,

“ I HAVE made many enquiries after your health,
 “ from those who frequently see you ; and they
 “ tell me you are much better. No one can
 “ more sincerely desire its perfect establishment
 “ than myself. I never forget you in my prayers ;
 “ if they are efficacious, you will experience
 “ their happy effects. I have several times been
 “ at your hotel, to congratulate you on your re-
 “ covery, but could never gain admiffion. The
 “ interpretation of which refusals it is impos-
 “ sible to mistake ; especially after your having
 “ written to me, that you would see me again,
 “ with pleasure, as soon as you were something
 “ better. I shall cease my importunities at your
 “ door, for it is uselefs to knock at any other
 “ door than that of your heart ; at which I am
 “ sure I have had admiffion. How great would
 “ be my happiness could I become instrumental
 “ in bringing you acquainted with what alone
 “ constitutes true happiness. I have the honor
 “ to be, &c. Signed, GAULTIER.
 Paris, March 30, 1778.

“ M. de Voltaire returned no answer to this letter, which determined me to pay him no more visits. During almost two months, M. de Voltaire did several things which were not very pleasing to me, and which I might perhaps have prevented, had I been permitted to converse with him freely.* His disease again attacked him about the end of the month of May. On the twenty-ninth I was told, that M. de Voltaire was not expected to recover. I then thought it my duty to write him an affectionate letter, once more to recall the good resolution he had formed to his mind. The following is a copy :

“ I learn, Sir, from public report, that you are dangerously ill. This news afflicts me much : but what increases my grief, is, that I have heard nothing further from you. Though every

* It was during this interval that Voltaire was crowned, at the theatre, where he received the honors of a kind of apotheosis. Just before the rising of the curtain, Brisard, the oldest of the actors, accompanied by his brethren, came into the box of Voltaire, and placed on his head a laurel crown. The poet, transported, took off the crown, exclaiming, with a kind of astonishment, *What ! will you overwhelm me, kill me with excess of glory !* The tragedy of Irene was afterwards acted, and, at the conclusion of the piece, the statue of Voltaire was exhibited on the stage, surrounded by the actors and actresses, who each placed on it a crown of laurel.

S

“ effort

“ effort I made, after your last illness, to gain admission was ineffectual, the remembrance of that shall not impede my return, should such be your wish. Should the Almighty be pleased to call you hence, how happy would it be for you, were you prepared to appear before him who is the great judge of judges : and how deplorable your state, should you be cut off ere you had properly reflected on the grand work of salvation ! Ah ! my dear Sir, think seriously of this important matter ; and of this only. Take advantage of the little time you have to live. Time with you will soon be past : and eternity will commence.

“ I have the honor to be, &c.

“ Signed, G A U L T I E R.

“ Paris, May 30, 1778.

“ Scarcely had M. de Voltaire received this letter, when, on the same day, about six in the evening, the Abbé Mignot, Counsellor of the Grand Council, and nephew to M. de Voltaire, came himself to request I would hear the confession of his uncle. Your last letter, said he, has made a great impression on him ; he is desirous to confess, and will only confess himself to you. I replied, that I would willingly confess M. de Voltaire, provided he made the following

“ lowing recantation, which I read to him, and
 “ which received his approbation :

“ I retract whatever I may have said, done,
 “ or written, repugnant to morality, or against
 “ the Christian religion, in which I have had the
 “ happiness to be born ; against the adorable per-
 “ son of Jesus Christ, whose divinity I am ac-
 “ cused of having attacked ; and against his church,
 “ in the bosom of which I desire to die ; making
 “ this present reparation in the face of the world,
 “ which I have offended by works that have for
 “ so many years back appeared under my name ;
 “ and this reparation is not the consequence of
 “ the decay of my intellects, enfeebled by old
 “ age, but of the grace of Jesus Christ, of which
 “ I was so unworthy, and which has opened my
 “ eyes to the horrible danger I have been led into,
 “ by the delirium of my imagination.

“ I desire that this recantation may be in-
 “ serted in all the journals and gazettes in Eu-
 “ rope ; in order that it may become as public as
 “ the offences I have committed, and which I am
 “ desirous to repair, as far as the short remains
 “ of life will permit. Signed at Paris, this thir-
 “ teenth of May, 1778, in the presence of the
 “ Curate of St. Sulpice and the Abbé Gaultier.

“ The Abbé Mignot † promised me that his
 “ uncle should sign this retractation. I then told
 “ him, that I should be very happy if the curate
 “ of St. Sulpice might be present, when M. de
 “ Voltaire retracted; and we went to the house
 “ of that worthy pastor, who willingly agreed to
 “ accompany us. Before we entered the chamber
 “ of M. de Voltaire, I read the retractation I had
 “ drawn up to the Marquis de Villette, who said,
 “ it met with his entire approbation.

“ We then entered the apartment of M. de
 “ Voltaire; the curate of St. Sulpice desired to
 “ speak with him first, but M. de Voltaire did
 “ not seem to know him. I then endeavored to
 “ speak to him in my turn. He seized my hand, and
 “ shewed signs of confidence and friendship; but
 “ I was much surprized to hear him say to me,
 “ Mr. Abbé Gaultier, I beg you would make my
 “ compliments to the Abbé Gaultier. He con-
 “ tinued to say several other unconnected things.
 “ As I perceived he was delirious, I said nothing
 “ to him either of his confession or his retractation.
 “ I requested those about him to let me know
 “ if his reason returned, which they promised
 “ me; but, alas! I was informed, the next day,
 “ that he expired three hours after we had left

† The Abbé Mignot, a respectable magistrate, did all in his
 power to persuade M. de Voltaire to die as became a Christian.

“ him,

“ him, that is, the 30th of May, 1778, about
 “ eleven at night *. If I had imagined he would
 “ have died so soon, I would never have left
 “ him, but have done my utmost to give him
 “ spiritual assistance. He died therefore without
 “ the sacraments! God grant he may not have
 “ died without a sincere desire to receive them,
 “ and an unfeigned intent to retract the impieties
 “ of his life.

“ This, may it please your Grace, is a faithful relation of the death of M. de Voltaire †.

“ So

* After the departure of the curate of St. Sulpice, and the Abbé Gaultier, M. Tronchin, Voltaire's physician, found his patient in most violent agonies, crying out, with all his strength, “ I am deserted both by God and Men !” Dr. Tronchin, who has related this fact to several respectable persons, could not forbear adding, “ I wish all those who have been seduced by the “ writings of Voltaire had been witnesses of his end : such a “ sight must have converted them.”

† This Memoir of the Abbé Gaultier being published at Paris, was thought spurious by many, and, among others, by M. de la Lande, who, to be satisfied of the truth, wrote the following letter to the Abbé Gaultier.

S I R,

A MEMOIR has been published in your name, at Paris, containing an account of the death of Voltaire, there are in it several letters which but little resemble his manner of writing. It asserts, that you never heard him confess, nor ever granted him

“ So deplorable an end ought to convince sinners
 “ of the danger of deferring their conversion to
 “ their last moments.

“ I have the honor to be,

“ With the most profound respect,

“ Your Grace’s most humble

“ And most obedient servant,

Paris, June 1, 1778.

“ GAULTIER, Priest.”

a certificate of confession ; that though you were requested to come and confess him, you did not find him in a proper condition, and that you had since been refused admittance. Suffer me, Sir, to ask you, whether this Memoir be really yours ; and if it be true, that you never gave him any certificate of confession. A Memoir like this may well be expected to excite the curiosity of a person attached to literature, and a pupil and friend of the Jesuits. I cannot doubt therefore but you will inform me how far I may depend on its authenticity, and hope you are convinced I am, with all respect,

Yours, &c.

Os. 12, 1778.

DE LA LANDE,

Of the Academy of Sciences, at the
 College Royal, Place de Cambray,

The Abbé Gaultier, in answer to this letter, assured M. de la Lande, that the Memoir in question was by him, and promised to shew him the original letters, signed by Voltaire, as well as the retraction, written in his own hand. M. de la Lande went to the Abbé Gaultier, and satisfied himself with regard to the authenticity of the Memoir,

As

As soon as the death of M. de Voltaire became public, it was likewise known the Archbishop determined to refuse him the rites of ecclesiastical interment. This resolution was much approved of by many, and was justified by M. Linguet some time after in his Annals.

This determination not to suffer M. de Voltaire to be buried in consecrated ground, at Paris, obliged his family to have recourse to expedients to procure the body to be interred elsewhere. They obtained from the Abbé Gaultier a certificate, dated the 30th of May, which testified, *He came at the requisition of M. de Voltaire to hear his confession, but that he found him incapable of the act.* The curate of St. Sulpice likewise gave a written consent, dated on the same day, *That the body of M. de Voltaire might be carried away without ceremony, and that he willingly renounced all his dues,*

The relations of M. de Voltaire, having procured these papers, pretended they would transport the body to Fernei, though that was by no means their intention. They carried it to Scellieres, an abbey of the Bernardines, in the diocese of Troyes in Champagne, where his obsequies were celebrated on the second of June, by the prior curate, assisted by four other curates of the neighbourhood, and some vicars. The bishop of Troyes, having been informed that the body of

the great patriarch of modern free-thinkers had been carried to Scellieres, immediately sent an order to forbid its interment. The order, however, arrived too late, for the Prior had already finished the ceremony. It was agreed that the body should not be taken up again; but the Bishop laid the chapel, in which it was buried, under an interdiction, and the Prior of Scellieres was deposed by his General.

A wit, on this occasion, wrote the following epitaph for Voltaire.

HIC INTER MONACHOS QUIESCIT, QUI NUN-
QUAM CONTRA MONACHOS QUIEVIT*.

As however the custom and statutes of the French Academy required a funeral service to be performed for every Academician, M. d'Alembert asked the Cordeliers of Paris, and perhaps others of the religious, to perform this pious office for M. de Voltaire, but they refused. "If the Cordeliers (says M. Linguet) had suffered themselves to be prevailed on by the Secretary of the academy, this would have afforded a new topic of mirth for the feasts of the philosophers, who would not have failed to ridicule a mass, sung by the Monks for hire, at the request of M.

* Here, among the Monks, rests he who never suffered Monks to rest,

d'Alem-

“ d’Alembert, for the repose of the soul of M. de “ Voltaire.” It was therefore thought highly improper to furnish them with this new subject for railery.

The partisans of M. de Voltaire complained loudly, but certainly without reason. The clergy did not prevent statues from being erected to him at the theatre, his eulogium to be proposed as the subject for the prize of the academy, or mausoleums to be built for him at his chateaus. But they would not permit the ashes of the faithful to be mingled with the remains of a man whose whole life had been devoted to the propagation of his irreligious tenets; a man whose old age appeared heated with impious phrenzy, and who, the nearer he approached the tomb, seemed to manifest a more violent hatred against religion and its ministers. These are the reflexions of M. Linguet, nor are they easily answered.

A N E C.

ANECDOTES OF VOLTAIRE*,

Collected from the Conversation of several
Inhabitants of Geneva, from different
learned Men, and from Letters relating
to this great Man,

Those who were not personally acquainted with M. de Voltaire, frequently enquire whether he was so ordinary in his person as his enemies represent. They have only to examine his portraits, they are very exact, especially that before the edition of his works, printed at Geneva in 1757. This was painted by Liotard, who was excellent at a likeness, and engraved by Balechore. The countenance of M. de Voltaire was lively, and expressive of a kind of archness. He had a sarcastic smile, his eyes sparkled with the fire of Prometheus, and, when he was animated by sensibility, his figure was not displeasing; espe-

* We are indebted for this collection of anecdotes to a literate person, who has amassed a great number of memoirs and letters on the most celebrated men of the age. We give them as we found them, and hope the public will receive them favourably, without making us responsible for such contradictions as may be found between these anecdotes and the preceding memoirs. The same man may be seen, by different people, in different lights;

cially

cially in the latter years of his life, when age had considerably softened his features.

M. Palissot has said, that Voltaire possessed much benevolence and generosity. He has certainly shewn these excellent qualities on several occasions, but, if such was his primitive character, it was much impaired, by that spirit of parsimonious exactness, to which he was very early addicted, by his fondness for ill-natured pleasantry and epicurean frivolity, and by the resentment he manifested at the satires levelled against him, and in fact, at the most just and candid criticism.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that his character was like his talents, unequal, and that the expression, little great man, which he made use of in his *Micromégas*, to ridicule Fontenelle, was applicable to himself both as a man and a writer.

But if the external appearance and temper of Voltaire were not always pleasing, he made amends for it by a liveliness in conversation, which many persons of wit and abilities have not possessed. Those who have never been in his company may form some idea of his manner, from the excellent scenes in *Nanine* and *L'Enfant prodigue*. His conversation was an agreeable mixture of lively bon mots, interesting reflections, happy applications,

plications, and discussions, which displayed real learning, without formality or pedantry. This is the style of the greater part of his letters, which his conversation greatly resembled, nay, exceeded; for when he was in a good humor, or pleased with his company, he animated what he said by the vivacity of his eyes, his action, and an air of gaiety and politeness which he then never failed to assume. Many who have gone into his company, strongly prejudiced against him, came away delighted and surprized, notwithstanding the disadvantageous ideas with which they had been prepossessed.

These great talents for conversation, appeared, however, to be considerably impaired when he came to Paris, in 1778. Those who were used to the polite world, says M. Mercier, remarked, that after so long an absence from the capital, he no longer preserved the happy medium between seriousness and pleasantry, vivacity and sententiousness. It was, besides, easy to see he had the itch of appearing ingenious; every phrase was manifestly studied, and this effort, being so apparent, became at last highly disagreeable.

But Paris, where Voltaire was obliged to receive so many visits, and reply to so many compliments,

pliments, was not the place where a proper judgment could be formed of his conversation. This could only be done at Fernei, in the midst of his intimate friends, or in some select society, while he received the incense of delicate flattery. Then it was that his natural gaiety shone forth in all its lustre, and though he might at first appear timid and constrained, he soon resumed his usual boldness and warmth.

Even at Paris, those who did not think him always natural (though it was rarely he was otherwise) were charmed with the sallies of wit which escaped him. The Dutchess of Luxembourg having said, in the presence of several persons of distinction, I sincerely wish our differences with England may be accommodated. Madam, replied M. de Voltaire, shewing her the sword of Marechal Broglio, who was present, This shall accommodate every difference.

Voltaire was not only prompt at reply, when the jest was against him, but perhaps still more so when complimented.

A man of wit, on his arrival at Fernei, having addressed him with these words,

Hic est Mecenas Virgiliusque simul.

In you we find both Mecenas and Virgil.

Vol-

Voltaire immediately replied, This ought to be true of one who is honored with such a visitor.

St. Hyacinth, with whom he had at first been very intimate, happening to be present at one of the representations of Oedipus, when the theatre was extremely crowded, said to M. de Voltaire, pointing to the multitude, Yonder is the best eulogium on your tragedy. Your approbation, replied Voltaire, is much more flattering to me than that of this assembly.

Voltaire, in all his letters, complained he was ill. He sometimes, perhaps, really was so; but, in general, he enjoyed a very good state of health, which in part he owed to his manner of living. His studies and watchings having brought on the scurvy, he for a long time confined himself to live on vegetables, and took a great deal of milk coffee; but as this beverage, which may be very beneficial when taken with some precautions, is apt to clog the stomach, he frequently purged with cassia. I am obliged, says he in one of his letters, to take physic four times a week, and therefore, as you may well imagine, am more fit for the shop of an apothecary than the court of a great Prince.

When

When it was very cold, he passed the greater part of the day in bed, but rose, when the weather was fine, and walked in his garden, or took an airing in his coach in the park.

By the side of his bed, which was very neat, and always strewn with books, was placed an elegant table, on which was water, milk-coffee, an ink-stand, and some slips of blank paper, to mark the pages he wished to read again, or on which he intended to make observations. He wrote in the margin of almost all the books he read, and his remarks, inspired by anger or disgust, shewed his opinion of the work: sometimes also he marked its beauties. He rarely read any work through, except he found it very excellent and interesting.

He frequently made abridgments of the writings of celebrated authors, preserving only what was good, and frequently reduced several volumes to one only.

He was very conversant in the old French authors, whom he much admired, and whose sprightly fables he frequently condescended to make his own.

What Voltaire has said of the early display of his talents, and his inclination for the arts, ought
not

not to pass unnoticed here, since it is undoubtedly true.

The Muses all presided at my birth,
 For ere I yet could speak I stammer'd verse ;
 To lov'd Parnassus, by Apollo led,
 My subject heart eager obey'd his laws :
 An ardent wish to rhyme, hath oft made rhimers ;
 I rhim'd spontaneous, in my own despatch.
 The love of science seiz'd, inflam'd my soul,
 I every art admir'd, nay, ador'd.

Few poets possessed such facility of composition. He wrote verses more rapidly than the generality of authors can write prose. The greater part of his dramatic pieces did not cost him more than a month, and some of them have been finished in a fortnight. Even in his advanced years, when his imagination might have been expected to be enfeebled, and his judgment impaired, this astonishing exuberance never forsook him. The fire of his genius was not extinguished by age. Those who then visited him frequently found his conversation, at first, languid and inanimate ; but, if they were once able to interest him in the subject, his eyes brightened by degrees, and shone at length with such lustre, that no one, who had not known him to be an old man, but must have supposed him a youth of most extraordinary vivacity.

It has been said, he enforced this sprightliness by the constant use of stimulatives, and, principally, by large quantities of coffee. But after he had put himself under the direction of M. Tronchin, he was certainly more moderate in the use of this beverage, which has been so much extolled by some, and decried by others; beside that, he diminished its strength by mixing with it a great deal of milk.

Notwithstanding this warmth of imagination, he maintained great exactness in his domestic affairs. He was probably the only poet who ever kept a regular ledger. While he was composing *Alzire*, *L'Enfant prodigue*, and his Newtonian philosophy, he superintended the building of the chateau of Cirei. "I am become," says he, in one of his letters about that time, "overseer of the workmen, I write their names every day in a large account-book." This was a very troublesome undertaking, but his pliant genius rendered every thing easy, and the pleasure of obliging the Marchioness du Chatelet sufficiently recompensed all his exertions.

Voltaire sometimes employed himself in speculations of finance, and was intimately connected with several financiers. A good account-

T

ant,

ant was superior in his estimation to a man of letters, except the latter greatly excelled in some particular species of composition. He even declared, that though they were commonly supposed merely self-interested, many among them had given proofs of the noblest generosity; as indeed, the following facts prove.

The Farmers General, during the war of 1741, were at the risk and trouble of borrowing, at five *per cent.* and lending to government at the same rate, without making any profit.

When M. Orri, in 1743, to favour commerce, suppressed the imposts on the exportation of linens, woollen manufactures, and tapistry, the Farmers General would not consent to receive any indemnity.

One of them furnished a whole province with corn, in a time of scarcity, without making any profit; and refused any other reward than a medal, which was struck in honor of him by that province.

Another financier, Samuel Bernard, who had frequently, alone, assisted his country, lent ten millions of livres (above four hundred thousand pounds) lent to individuals, half of which bore no interest.

When the subscription for the edition of *Cornéille*, intended for the benefit of his niece, was opened,

opened, the company of Farmers General subscribed for sixty copies.

All these particulars are to be found in the works and letters of M. de Voltaire. He had therefore some reason to say, in his *Babouc*, when speaking of financiers, they are inflated clouds, which return in rain the dew they have sucked from the bosom of the earth.

It is well known the Abbé du Jarri obtained the prize in 1714. His poem was below mediocrity, and the critics were, with reason, astonished it should be preferred to the Ode of Voltaire, which, though not excellent, was manifestly its superior. The victor had flattered La Motte, and his flatteries procured him the medal. A man of wit said, on this occasion, persons in power recompense their panegyrists with pensions, and academicians with prizes.

The Abbé du Jarri, the Abbé Nadal, and the Abbé de Pons, were among the first who criticised Voltaire. The Abbé de Pons called his *Mariamne*, a corpse covered with pearls; but bestowed the highest commendations on the works of La Motte, which occasioned this Epigram by Gacon.

Little De Pons admires the *great* La Motte;
Great man ! great wit ! great genius ! great—what not!
Little De Pons was prone to magnify :
Each man's a giant in a dwarfish eye.

The Abbé Nadal, who had himself written a tragedy, entitled *Mariamne*, joined with the Abbé de Pons, in his opinion of Voltaire's *Mariamne*. He criticized it severely in his preface, and mentioned Thiriot, a friend to the young poet, who privately vended the prohibited works of Voltaire. The latter never replied to these invectives, but when M. Titon du Tillet had cast a piece of bronze, which he called the French Parnassus, and in which he had introduced several indifferent versifiers in company with the greatest poets of the French nation, Voltaire proposed as follows, to join with them the Abbé Nadal.

With your Helicon, pray, Monsieur Titon, make haste;
Let Danchet, St. Didier, and Nadal be plac'd
All-a-row, on your mount ; let a like load of bays,
A like crop of laurel, like quantum of praise
By Nadal, St. Didier, and Danchet up-borne,
St Didier and Danchet and Nadal adorn.

The Abbé Nadal never forgave this epigram, and Voltaire was from that time decried by him as the last of poets.

Thiriot,

Thiriot, whom Nadal had attacked, because he was Voltaire's friend, was known to the enemies of that poet by the name of Friar Nicaise. By this they intended to ridicule the blind admiration he always expressed for the author of the *Henriade*. He was a very worthy man, but perhaps did not possess those abilities which might be expected in the friend of Voltaire. His company was sought after by the literati of Paris, because he was acquainted with a great number of anecdotes of that celebrated man, and in possession of several pieces of poetry, which had been communicated to none but himself.

The resentment of Voltaire, at the injustice done him by La Motte, did not soon subside. He first revenged himself by *Le Bourbier*, a satire, in the manner of Marot. He wrote several epigrams, and when he met with M. de la Motte, was not sparing in sarcastic bon mots.

That academician having one day said, he intended to write a tragedy of Oedipus in prose : Do so, replied Voltaire, and I will turn your Ines* into verse.

M. Bel had before sarcastically said, in a criticism on the writings of La Motte, that he had given a prosaic versification of his dramatic pieces, in order to accustom the public to prose-tragedies.

* A tragedy in verse by La Motte.

Voltaire, in his youth, experienced the misfortunes consequent on imprudence. He was confined in the Bastille, and banished to Sulli sur Loire. While he was in his exile, he wrote an epistle to the Regent, at present not very common, which concluded with a kind of petition for his recall.

Fame and support from thee I hop'd to find,
And shall thy mercy, to my miseries blind,
Extend to all, except alone to me,
Who wander, exil'd, fighting to be free?
Must I, who sing thy praise, thy rigor feel?
No—from thee to thyself I dare appeal:
Since innocence from thee can't suffer blame,
I not thy pity, but thy justice claim.
Deign here to read what love and truth indite,
Not what my enemies, but what I write;
And say if, thro' this work, thou dost not find,
Marks of a noble, an unspotted mind:
Or, if the heart that feels and knows thy worth,
Could give to such detested libels birth
As they to me impute. Think, Prince, if chance
Should make thee o'er some portrait cast a glance,
Might not thy judgment, hasty given, tho' strong,
Mised by worms or varnish, once be wrong,
And, on the time-worn canvas, falsely trace
Raphael's touches in a Vignon* face?
Poets, oh Prince, thus copy and deceive,
A rival nation prone to lie and thieve.

* A bad painter.

But

But didst thou know their slanders, and my heart,
 I then shou'd dread not Envy's keenest dart ;
 Unveil'd they'd stand, and I no more shou'd pine,
 Oppress'd in youth, and see my day decline ;
 Virtuous thyself, thou virtue would'st respect,
 Ceasing to persecute, thou would'st protect ;
 Perhaps would'st patronize a poor recluse,
 Nor rank his writings with their gross abuse.

M. de la Faye and M. Fourmont were two men of letters, who were highly agreeable to Voltaire, because they added, to their wit and learning, all the embellishments of the most unaffected politeness. When M. de la Faye died, M. Fourmont address'd some verses on that event to M. de Voltaire, their common friend. The poet replied in the following quatrain :

Your verses, like yourself, we must admire,
 They breathe a rational poetic fire ;
 Painting your friend, in ev'ry touch, we find
 Some feature of your own ingenuous mind.

About the year 1735, Voltaire turned his studies almost entirely to physics and philosophical enquiries ; less to gratify his own inclination, than to oblige the Marchioness du Chatelet. This cost him great attention and labor. He has declared, that he always left his study considerably indisposed, and, when he had written any thing of this kind,

he was forced to have recourse to the assistance of other learned men to revise his writings.

The work published under the title of *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy*, was esteemed superficial, but nobody could charge it with obscurity; and it certainly required great strength of genius to pass from the flowers of the *Belles Lettres* to the thorns of the *Sciences*, and yet completely to conceal those thorns from the reader. Indeed many readers, accustomed to his enchanting style, imagined they should be able to understand his book as easily as a work of mere entertainment. The author has warned them against such a mistake, "I believe," says he in a letter to M. Berger, "that any one who has been a little accustomed to exercise his mind, will easily understand my book; but if any suppose it is a work which may be read between the opera and supper time, like a tale of La Fontaine, they will find themselves greatly mistaken. It is a book which requires study and attention."

When Voltaire published, at Paris, his *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy*, adapted to every capacity, which had first appeared in Holland, he reserved to himself an hundred and fifty copies, which

which he distributed to the principal magistrates and learned men in Paris, who were able to form a judgment of his book. The Abbé des Fontaines, when he reviewed it, accompanied a few praises with a very malicious witticism. He pretended, at the end of his critique, that, among the errors of the press, there was one very necessary to be corrected. In the title, *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy, adapted to every capacity*, instead of *adapted*, said the Abbé, we ought to read *adulterated*.*

The Marchioness du Chatelet well deserved all the eulogiums bestowed on her by Voltaire. Those who knew her assert, she had much wit and a universal genius; that she possessed both sensibility and generosity; that, though not remarkably handsome, she was genteely shaped, had fine eyes, and many of the charms of her own sex, added to all the solidity of the other. Voltaire intended to describe her under the name of Theone in his Babouc. There are, says he, many old women who decry her, but she does much more good than all of them. No advantage whatever could tempt her to be guilty of the slightest injustice. Solely

* *Elémens de la Philosophie de Newton, mis à la portée de tout le monde* : il falloit lire — *mis à la portée de tout le monde*.

intent

intent on the advancement of his glory, she gives her lover the most disinterested advice. He would blush, if, in her presence, he had neglected any opportunity to do good.

Who is this divinity you celebrate ? said M. de Cideville to M. de Voltaire. The latter replied—

Not who Emilia is, but what
 A few short touches shall denote.
 A beauty she ; and yet a friend !
 Tho' Sports and Wiles on her attend,
 Yet, knowing well his knavish lures,
 She turns Dan Cupid out of doors.
 Flow'ry her fancy ; yet, tho' just,
 Dazzle it may ; delight it must.
 Solid her reason, yet sublime ;
 Exub'rant, oft, too high 'twould climb:
 So vast her genius, too, that it
 Horace or Newton, might besit.
 Yet she to trifling can descend ;
 To tattler's tattle ; or contend,
 With diamonds, clubs, spades, hearts provided,
 Till Folly's battles are decided.

Madame du Chatelet, amid the most attentive application to study, actually entered, and with enthusiasm, into all the pleasures of society. She sang, she danced, and was an excellent actress.

Hèr

Her soul is wove from web so fine,
 Pliant each form it takes,
 Mounts in the morn to heights divine,
 And in the evening rakes.

Thus wrote M. de Voltaire to the Comte de Sade, "Fashions, drefs, and bawbles, adds he, "are fuitable to her age; but her merit is fuperior "to her age, to her own fex, or to ours."

Madame du Chatelet alfo wrote verfes: at leaft I have by me feveral little pieces which bear her name. I fhall only quote an epiftle to the King of Pruffia, which I believe has never been printed.

Half woman, half philofopher,
 Thro' this poor world a paffenger,
 Where fimple peace and fmiles refort,
 Far from the baubles of a court,
 Intrigues and politics, and lies;
 Far from the follies I defpife;
 From love's inconfancies and tricks;
 From fops and fools, and fanatics;
 Far from that mercenary hoft,
 Who dupe defpifed ignorance moft,
 In folitude, contemplative,
 And happy liberty I live.

Not that, by metaphor and trope,
 I'd fhew myfelf a mifanthrope;
 I hate not all: 'twere mif'ry then,
 Singly to fnarl and guard my den!

No—

No—I've a friend, Voltaire, whom you,
 Perhaps, hold worthy friendship too ;
 With him, I wisdom's lessons con,
 While time and tide glide gently on.
 Of men or gods I nothing wanted,
 Where one small dose of prudence granted.
 From these said gods we've one selected,
 To whom our temples are erected ;
 The decorated walls, around,
 With precepts from himself abound.
 Here I, retired, in thought serene,
 Those wish'd-for fruits of prudence glean.
 Ask you to know the sacred name ?
 'Tis Frederic ! Seated fast by Fame,
 Lo ! yonder, from Olympus, he
 Charms and instructs the world and me,
 Ah ! wherefore may not I ascend,
 With lesser gods, adoring bend ?
 Alas ! from us inferior wits,
 Obscur'd by glory, Frederic sits.
 For me, of nature all serene,
 Nymph of the woods, and meadows green,
 I, near the sedgy banks of Blaise,
 Unenvied pass, on earth, my days.
 And canst thou not, a moment, cleave
 The clouds, and all thy thunders leave ?
 Ah ! sure, to be oblig'd to reign,
 Must give the social spirit pain.

It is not true, that Voltaire quarrelled with the
 family of the Marchioness du Chatelet, after the
 death

death of that illustrious Lady. There is a letter from him, dated Fernei, to Madame de Chambo-nin, in which he says, " Do you not sometimes
 " see the Marquis du Chatelet ? His son has writ-
 " ten to me from Vienna. He has rendered him-
 " self of considerable importance at a very early
 " age. This cannot but give a most sensible
 " pleasure to his father ; if you see him, do not
 " forget to make my respects."

There are many verses addressed to Madame du Chatelet that have never been published. We have seen some which are worthy being preserved. The following were written on her library.

Some rest, some study, some few jokes,
 Few silly books, few silly folks,
 A friend, much solitude, no state,
 Say, is not mine a happy fate!

But what does much more honor to the Mar-chioness du Chatelet than the verses of Voltaire, is, that that poet performed the greater part of his acts of beneficence during his stay at Cirei. Several men of letters experienced his generosity, and among others, M. d'Arnaud, whom he, from time to time, furnished with small sums, to procure him admission into the theatre. This excellent man, being afterwards desirous of returning
 the

the money to M. de Voltaire, the latter told him,
 “ It was a mere trifle, and that a child never re-
 “ turned fugar plumbs to his father.”

Several other persons partook of the liberality of M. de Voltaire, who, living under the eye of so generous a lady, followed her advice and example. Not but he had before been a benefactor to many men of learning, but he was more particularly so at that period ; nothing encouraging us so much to virtuous actions, as to know they are witnessed by a person whose esteem we desire to obtain.

Notwithstanding the various poetical descriptions which have represented Fernei as a palace built by Fairies, it was no more than a neat, agreeable country house ; convenient, but not spacious, since it had but seven windows in front. Every thing there had more the appearance of the commodious retreat of a person of moderate fortune, than the sumptuous dwelling of an opulent unmarried man. This has been said of it by the Marquis de Luchet. Some neat furniture, servants modestly habited, a table well supplied, but unexpensive, gardens adorned by Nature alone,
 and

and a park, kept in no great order, compose the whole description of Fernei.

The church, which Voltaire pulled down and rebuilt in another place, to enlarge the prospect from his house, is a small and simple edifice.

The theatres, which have been so frequently mentioned, presented no very brilliant decorations. The side scenes were ornamented with leaf brasts and paper flowers. The perspective consisted of Arcades cut to form a kind of piazza. The curtain, instead of baize, was a cloth, on which was painted, in cinnamon colour, an immense sun. On such a theatre were *Zaire*, *Alzire*, and *Merope* acted.

Though Voltaire was a poet, and a great poet, he does not seem to have looked on poetry in so important a light as many of his brother bards. “ I know not, says the Abbé Trublet, what he really thinks of prose and verse, for I do not absolutely rely on what he says in his writings.”

It is very certain, that, as soon as he began to study the Newtonian philosophy, he considered himself much superior to Rousseau, whom he very unjustly calls a paltry versifier. “ Rousseau, said he, despises me because I sometimes neglect rhyme, and I despise him because he knows nothing but to rhyme.”

Pope

Pope having become a philosopher, or being desirous to be thought one, has expressed himself on the subject of poetry in much the same manner as Voltaire. "Whenever I think seriously, I cannot but think these things very idle; as idle as if a beast of burden should go on gingling his bells, without bearing any thing valuable about him, or ever serving his master." (Letter to Ed. Blount, 1723.)

Voltaire, indeed, could not pardon verses which did not rise above mediocrity; he preferred prose to such compositions; but no person was more delighted with poetry truly excellent. He was lavish in eulogiums on Racine, and there is no doubt but his praises of that elegant and harmonious poet, the Virgil of France, were really sincere.

When he was asked to write a commentary on Racine, as he had done on Corneille, 'What would you have me remark?' said he: I could only write at the bottom of every page, exquisite! beautiful! pathetic!

Voltaire looked on Racine as the model for poetical, and Mafillon for prose writers. On the table, near his bed, *Athalie* always lay by the side of the *Petit-Carême*.

A young scholar having one day spoken slightly of Boileau and Racine, in the presence of
Voltaire,

Voltaire, " Softly, young man, said he, John
 " and Nicholas are our masters ; let us respect
 " them, and endeavor to imitate their beauties."

The young man endeavoring to support what
 he had said by quoting the opinion of an Academician,
 suspected of not much admiring those two great poets
 " Pshaw, replied Voltaire, his verses
 " are the highest panegyric on theirs !"

The correctness of Boileau, and the pathetic
 elegance of Racine, had rendered him no great
 admirer of any of the English poets.

Being asked one day what he thought of the
 genius of Milton, " The ancients, replied he, re-
 " commended us to sacrifice to the Graces, but
 " Milton sacrificed to the Devil." Milton, how-
 ever, studied the graceful as intimately as the sub-
 lime of poetry ; as numberless passages prove.

There was a law suit between the Marchioness
 de B ** , Lady to the Princesses, and the Comte
 de L **, who reciprocally accused each other of
 a gaming defraud, relative to two contracts. This
 trifling dispute had produced complaints, appeals,
 and requisitions at Plombiers, where it happened.
 M. de Voltaire, being there at that time, was
 chosen arbitrator, and wrote the following verses
 on the memoir of Madame de B ** as his award :

U

Vain

Vain your complaints, you've nothing lost;
 'Tis you the thief are, to our cost;
 You steal our freedom, while your heart
 You guard too well from Love's keen dart;
 But Venus, Queen of Sports and Smiles,
 Proclaims you caught by your own wiles.

A young poet, who thought himself an original writer, having consulted him on a tragedy, full of extraordinary incidents, Voltaire pointed out to him the defects of his piece. The Rhimer replied, he had purposely forsaken the beaten track of Corneille and Racine. "So much the worse," returned Voltaire; originality is nothing "but judicious imitation."

A moment's impatience and displeasure, at seeing Madame D * * using cosmetics, produced the following lines.

If chance, or money, should insure,
 To your carbuncled face a cure;
 Tho' much less ugly than before,
 Of ugliness you'd still have store.

Modern history, said Voltaire, on a particular occasion, is rendered insipid by dwelling on trivial incidents, fit only for gazettes. The gravity of the ancient historians disdained those minutiae, and only described great and important events.

Their

Their pictures, therefore, have more boldness and expression.

Voltaire seemed to believe he had more admirers in England than in France. This might be the case in 1730, but latterly he had as many partisans at Paris as at London, or even more; because, having assumed in all his writings the sprightly air of the Parisians, he pleased almost every body.

Life, said Voltaire, is thick sown with thorns, and I know no other remedy than to pass quickly through them. The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater is their power to harm us.

Methuselah himself, did he exist, could never read, said he, on another occasion, all the nonsense which is daily printed. I know not, added he, but the scarcity of books among the ancients, might be preferable to that multitude of publications which swarm from the presses of London and Paris.

Being present, early in his life, together with Manpertuis, in the dressing-room of the King of

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Prussia;

Prussia ; he addressed to the Philosopher of St. Maloes, then his friend, this impromptu :

See from that head, rever'd, the ringlets flow,
 Pure as his manners is that ample fleece ;
 His locks, types of his genius, white as snow,
 Have Time outstript, and still with Time increase.

Ingenuity, in adapting the conversation to the persons with whom they conversed with, was common to Fontenelle, La Motte, and also to Voltaire. The first time the Duke of N, an English nobleman, came to see the latter, he turned the conversation on what might most interest his Grace. He discoursed on the heroic deeds of his ancestors, and, thence digressing to the illustrious persons produced, by his country, gave his opinion on the merits of Robertson and Hume.

Voltaire was not fond of academic eulogiums, which he considered as only proper to give a false coloring to facts, and to produce declaimers. Instead of that exaggerated panegyric, often bestowed on persons of very inconsiderable merit, he recommended historical discussions, in the manner of Plutarch, in which more regard might be paid to truth. The Marquis de Villette relates this of him ; and adds, that, one day reading to him

him one of these declamatory eulogiums, he grew dull and tired before he had heard a third part of it.

Voltaire compared the English to a butt of their own strong beer, the froth at top, dregs at bottom, but the middle excellent.

“Your nation, like your language, said Voltaire, one day to an Englishman, is a strange mixture of a variety of others. When I behold one of your countrymen fond of the tricks and chicane of law, I say, there is a Norman, who came over with William the Conqueror. When I see another, affable and polite, he has the manners of a Platagenet; or a third, outrageous and brutal, that, says I, is a Dane.”

Notwithstanding his enthusiasm in behalf of the English, he confessed, there were among them many unfociable and melancholic characters. He one day said to Lord Lyttleton,

Capricious, proud, the self-same axe avails,
To chop off Monarch's heads, or horses tails.

In some farewell verses to the Marquis de Villette, Voltairè, after having been received with

U 3

much

much respect at Paris, thus renounced his prejudices against his country ;

Tho' absent long, I Frenchmen find the same,
Mild, learned, social, active, fond of fame ;
Born to be lov'd, when educated well,
The world they vie with, England far excel.

Discourfing of the History of England, " The hangman, faid he, fhould be their hiftorian, for he has ufually fettled their difputes."

Yet he was fond of fpeaking Englifh, and converfed in that language with Dr. Franklin, the Lycurgus of America. Madame Denis, being prefent, faid, " She fhould be very glad if they would fpeak French, that fhe might underftand and improve by their difcourfe." " Niece, replied Voltaire, I own I am proud of being able to fpeak the language of a Franklin."

Voltaire, after his difputes with La Beaumelle, was told by fomebody, that writer had faid he would purfue him to hell. " Whenever he pleafes, replied Voltaire, he will find no impediment, and he richly merits fuch a refting place."

Speak-

Speaking of the overbearing disposition discovered by Maupertuis, in his quarrel with Koenig, he said, "He resembled the weazel in the fable, who did not care if he put both heaven and earth in confusion, for the sake of a rabbit's hole which he had usurped."

When he was told that the King of Prussia was greatly prejudiced against him by his enemy, "Well, said he, I appeal from the Great Man ill-informed, to the Great Man better-informed."

An author, whose former works had been twenty years forgotten, having broken his literary silence by an attack on Voltaire; the latter wrote to one of his friends, "This man has left the abode of the dead to speak evil of the living."

On officer of the regiment of Conti, then in garrison at Fernei, having caught and supported him as he stumbled, he thanked him by quoting the following lines from *Zaire*,

"A Frenchman's arm and honor I revere,
To me they ever useful were and dear."

U 4

He

He repeated the same compliment to the Chevalier de l'Escure, who presented him, on his last journey to Paris, with an impromptu in his praise.

The Comte de **, coming to Fernei to see Voltaire, the poet said to him, "You resemble Orpheus, who descended to the habitation of shadows. I am now no more than a shadow." "You are a most paradoxical shadow then, replied the Comte, for you emit great light."

When Voltaire was told, that Mr. Needham had produced eels by an infusion of grains of corn in water, he replied, "I believe nothing of it. *Il ya la anguille sous roche**; time will discover the truth." In fact, on a repetition of the experiment, it was discovered that these supposed eels were only farinaceous particles in a state of fermentation.

The Marquis de Villette, whose conversation was particularly agreeable to Voltaire, remained with him, at Fernei, five months. A young lady of rank, but small fortune, tho' possessed of every

* *An eel under a rock.* A French proverb, signifying, there is some error: the wit was in the application.

grace

grace and accomplishment, was then at Fernei. Voltaire soon perceived, with great satisfaction, that the Marquis was very attentive to that lady, and proposed his marrying her, with a portion of a hundred and fifty thousand livres (above six thousand pounds). "I am sure, said he, Madame Denis will have no objection; for she looks on *Belle & Bonne* †, (which was the name he gave to Mademoiselle de Varicourt) as her daughter. As to my other relations, I have money enough to leave them at my death, and you must be sensible they have no vast while to wait."

The Marquis de Villette would not accept this generous offer; but married Mademoiselle de Varicourt with scarcely any fortune. When Voltaire was complimented on having been the occasion of this marriage, he replied, I have made two persons happy, and one wife.

The Marquis de Villette, writing from Fernei, said of Mademoiselle de Varicourt, with whom he was then desirous to share his fortune. "She is the guardian angel of the patriarch, and is become necessary to his existence. You cannot imagine how affecting it is to see the fond caresses she lavishes on him, and the grateful manner in which he kisses her hands. It is Anacreon served by Hebe."

† Beautiful and Good.

A picture,

A picture, she, of every grace,
 That, moving, ornaments each place :
 Whether in kitchen, or in hall,
 Mistress or maid, admir'd by all !
 Fresh from the hand of Nature, she
 Has Nature's pure simplicity.
 We look, and start are aw'd, yet warm'd ;
 A Vestal, yet a Bacchante form'd !
 Uniting, in supreme degree,
 Incitive smiles and chaste severity,

During his last illness, Voltaire earnestly requested Madame de Villette to send for a notary, that he might leave her further proofs of his regard. That young lady, too grateful for the favors she had already received to be desirous of more, refused for once to comply with the request of her dying benefactor. Voltaire therefore wrote a letter to M. d'Alembert, in which he said, "That, as he had but a few moments to live, he had made use of them to recommend to his care Madame de Villette."

The day after his arrival in the capital, Voltaire presented her to several ladies of the court who came to see him. "Ladies, said he, this " is *Belle et Bonne*; she took pity on my old " age. It is to her I owe the happiness of seeing " you, and indeed, that I yet exist."

Voltaire

Voltaire's care and tenderness for Madame de Villette was repaid by a truly filial gratitude. Three months after the death of that celebrated man, whom she considered as her father, she could not pronounce his name without shedding tears; nor recollect the sports of her childhood, in which he had so frequently borne a part, without experiencing the tenderest emotions.

We shall here add the fragment of a letter from M. de Voltaire to a relation of the Marquis de Villette.

" The happy pair, Madam, have given me
 " permission to congratulate you on their fel-
 " city. Mademoiselle de Varicourt formerly con-
 " sented to be my daughter; Madame de Villette
 " has now arrived at a much greater honor, that
 " of being your niece. This distinction, I can
 " assure you, she well deserves. I only restore
 " you your own: Virtue, an enlarged understand-
 " ing, and the Graces. My age and infirmities
 " will not permit me to pay you my respects in
 " person, but nothing can diminish the sincere
 " regard with which I have the honor to be, &c."

The following verses were addressed to the Marquis de Villette, on his marriage, by M. de la Harpe :

For you, Felicity her garland wreaths,
 To you, his richest gem Voltaire bequeaths;

His

His was the happy task which bliss allures,
His last best work to render perfect yours:

When Voltaire was last at Paris, at the first visit he made to M. le Comte d'Argental, he said to "him, I have put off dying to come and see you."

The Comte d'Argental was the intimate friend of Voltaire, and it was him of whom he said, "He is born to increase the harmony of souls, as Racineau was to enrich the harmony of sounds." He made him the confident of whatever he wrote. When the *Enfant Prodigue* was first acted, the name of the author was concealed, and only known to M. d'Argental and Mademoiselle Quinault. Voltaire wrote thus to that actress; "You are able
" to keep the secrets of another as well as your
" own. Were it known I am the author, the
" piece would have been hissed: the world can-
" not endure the same person should succeed in
" two different kinds of composition. I have
" made myself enemies enough by Oedipus and
" the *Henriade*."

In 1776, a print was published, entitled, The Breakfast of Fernei. M. de la B***, designer of this engraving, is there represented at the tea-table,

table, very plump and bulky, as he was; while Voltaire is in bed as thin as a skeleton. At sight of this caricature, he exclaimed, "This is poor Lazarus at the table of the wicked Dives." And seeing another print, he asked, "Was it worth all this trouble to represent me so ugly."

It is well known he was like Horace, *irasci celer*, and even much more so than Horace; for his passion sometimes became a kind of rage. To excite this, the name of Freron was sufficient. A friend, who had called to see him at Fernei, said to him, one day, in the course of conversation, on the author of the *Année Littéraire*; "You would not then receive him, if he should come to pay you a visit?" "Receive him! exclaimed Voltaire, I would shew him the shortest way out of the house." "But if he actually should come, replied his friend, would not this be doing homage to your genius?" "It would so—It would so, returned Voltaire. Yes, if he should come, I would certainly accomodate him with the best bed in my house." Thus by humoring his vanity, it was easy to sooth the violence of his temper. His intimates were well acquainted with this secret, and, by repeating a few of his own verses, their common-place flattery could prodce the same effect, on him, that the harp of David did upon Saul.

Voltaire

Voltaire did not approve those heteroclite dramas, which are neither tragedy nor comedy; and only serve to shew the incapacity of the author to write either the one or the other. A man of letters, from Paris, being on a visit at Fernei, Voltaire asked, "What news from the French theatre; do they still continue, says he, to play at bowls with death's heads?" This was the expression of an author of the last age concerning the English.

Voltaire, one day, read the manuscript of his tragedy of Merope to the Abbé de Voisenon, who esteemed it admirable. "Yet, said Voltaire, the actors have rejected it." They did not refuse it long; it was acted, and met with the greatest success, both through its own merit, and the admirable performance of Mademoiselle Dumefnil. "What would you say (writes Voltaire in one of his letters) to an actress who drew tears from the audience during three successive acts? The auditors gave me all the credit for the exquisite pleasure they received: part of it was due to the performers. The enthusiasm of the pit was so extravagant that they demanded to see me, in the most clamorous manner; I was carried forcibly into the box belonging to the
" Lady

“ Lady of Marechal Villars, who was there with
 “ her daughter-in-law. The audience were frantic,
 “ they called out for the Duchess de Villars to
 “ kiss me, and made so much noise, she was
 “ obliged to comply, by order of her mother-
 “ in-law. I was kissed in public, as Alain Char-
 “ tier was by the Princess Margaret of Scotland;
 “ but he was asleep, and I was wide awake.”
 (*Letter to M. d'Aguebierre.*)

This enthusiasm of the public transported Voltaire; he was as pleased as a child with so much celebrity: nor did he conceal the satisfaction he felt. It even hindered him from sleeping. Letters from a Prince or a Minister have sometimes deprived him of rest, and disturbed the repose of his retreat; which ought to have been the retreat of a philosopher.

After the representation of *Alzire*, Madame du Chatelet, being asked, why he appeared so dissatisfied in the most agreeable company? “ Because, said she, the execution of a notorious robber has diverted the attention of the public. M. de Voltaire, and his fine tragedy, are no longer talked of. This occasions his uneasiness, he cannot forgive the tortured criminal.”

A young man, who intended to study physic, having communicated his design to Voltaire,
 “ What

"What have you undertaken? said he, smiling? Why to convey drugs, of which you know but little, into a body of which you know still less."

Yet he frequently consulted physicians, and sometimes even quacks, though he had but little faith in the medical art. "Regimen, said he, is better than physic." Every one should be his own physician. We ought to assist, and not to force Nature; but, more especially, we should learn to suffer, grow old, and die. Some things are salutary, and others hurtful; eat with moderation, what you know by experience agrees with your constitution. Nothing is good for the body, but what we can digest; what medicine can procure digestion? Exercise. What will recruit strength? Sleep. What will alleviate incurable evils? Patience."

To this patience he frequently added the remedies prescribed by able physicians; he allowed these were very rare. "Their art, said he, like every other, requires genius; nor is it possible to foretell the issue of many disorders, without that aptness at prognostic, which characterizes the physician of genius. A character most rare and estimable, for every profession produces its Virgils and its Mœviuses."

He recommended, to those who did not possess this genius, to wait the efforts of Nature, and rather to observe than to act.

He did not approve of the remedies of mountebanks. His pleasantries against the anti-apoplectic amulet of the apothecary Arnoud, by wearing which many have died of apoplexies, and the beaume de vie, useful on some occasions, but dangerous if too frequently used, are well known. He was told, one day, that Hippocrates prescribed the blood of an asses foal for madness; that, said he, is a remedy which seems to have been invented by some person who labored under the disease.

Voltaire frequently ridiculed those wretched rhimers, who talk of the elegance in which they live while they are dying with hunger, and who rack their imagination to celebrate their voluptuous leisure. He has not forgotten them in his *Pauvre Diable*.

No coat, no shoes, no stockings, shiv'ring I,
 Wrapt up, sans sheet, in half a blanket lie;
 Dead small beer sip, and sing from parch'd-up throat,
 Champagne and nectar, in most mournful note;
 Starving, of dainties, balls, and banquets vaunt,
 Tort'ring my brain, the charms of ease to chaunt.

X

He

He certainly ought to have dissuaded, from the dangerous path of literature, numbers of those young persons, without fortune, who mistake the phrenzy of making bad verses for genius; but instead of giving salutary advice to the prodigious number of paltry versifiers, who paid him homage, he encouraged, extolled, and fed them with flattery and hopes.

There was no scribbler, says M. Mercier, who did not write to Voltaire. He was so kind as to answer all their letters, because they flattered his excessive self-love. It was the traffic of vanity, in which much was said, and nothing meant. Voltaire has been often known to retract, after the death of authors, the praises he had bestowed on them while living; and disavow, in conversation, the flatteries he so liberally dispensed in his writings. There are no less than seven authors, known, to whom he had either said or wrote; I consider you as my heir. You shall supply my place. You will be my successor. And other expressions to the same purport. Among these, some may perhaps have imitated his manner with success, but certainly France has not produced seven Vol-taires.

Somebody having said to him, How can you flatter so extravagantly such indifferent writers?

These

These authors, already so vain, will be quite out of their senses with your praises. What would you have me do? replied he; I have no other way to get rid of them. Would you have me tell them they are magpies, when they imagine themselves eagles? They would not believe me, and I should but arm their vanity against myself.

Situated, like the great, between flattery and malignity, he endeavored to cherish the one, and restrain the other.

Voltaire was loud in his commendations of Diderot, but certainly entertained nearly the same opinion of him he did of Palissot, which was, that he had a strong understanding, but was often scarcely intelligible; magnifying common place ideas, and announcing the chimeras of his imagination as important discoveries; prolix and incorrect in his writings, which yet, from some occasional shining passages, might be compared to a chaos, in which the light breaks forth at intervals.

Voltaire has written several very flattering letters to a celebrated writer, whose literary productions do him great honor. He, however, thought much better of his art of poetry than his poetical

X 2

pieces.

pieces. He is, said he, like Moses, who conducted others to the promised land, though he never entered it himself. When the opera of *Roland*, written anew by the same author, was acted, he was asked to go and see it : No, said he, Quinault has forbidden me.

All the editions of Voltaire's works contain a great number of pieces which are not his. He sometimes would say, my inventory is already made out, though I am not yet dead, and every one inserts some of his goods to obtain a sale for them. He sometimes wrote to the publishers : Do not print such a number of things ascribed to me, there is no travelling down to posterity with so much baggage. He, who of all our poets is the lightest and airiest in his style, is most voluminous and heavy in the external appearance of his works. They have been four times published in quarto, and loaded with a great number of things which should have been rejected. A hungry editor, says he, is glad of this trash to fill up a volume, which he thinks not sufficiently large. Such abuses prevail in literature, and almost in every kind of trade. There are merchant ships, and there are pirates : the world is full of these frauds.

The

The Marquis de Villette relates a very extraordinary anecdote, which is, that Voltaire had a fever, every year, on St. Bartholomew's day, on which he never received any visits, but kept his bed, while a certain unaccountable affection of his organs, and an intermitting quickness of pulse, sufficiently marked this periodical crisis. He must, however, have been less affected by this extraordinary paroxysm than has been pretended, because there are some verses, of his writing, dated the twenty-fourth of August, or St. Bartholomew's-day. It is true he ~~wishes~~ this day, so calamitous to France, might—

With long forgotten history,
Buried in oblivion be ;
Mortals, condemn'd to suffer, ought,
With happier times, to have their memory fraught.

The President Kinglin, of Colmar, had a son disordered with the palsy in his legs and thighs. Voltaire, as he kissed the child, who was very handsome, said, “ Here is the head of Cupid on the body of “ Lazarus.”

After the representation of *Alzira*, the conversation, in a company where Voltaire was present,

turned on the impression which the noble and christian sentiments of Gusman had made on the audience; the Marchioness of *, who had played the part of Alzira, remarked, that christianity naturally inspires us with an elevation of soul: Yes, charming Alzira, said Voltaire, but you cause the damnation of those whom Gusman converts. This answer is only a repetition of the end of an epigram he formerly addressed to Mademoiselle Gauffin; but it has been frequently remarked, that Voltaire often repeated, in prose, what he had before written, in verse.

Madame de *, who was very handsome, spoke highly in praise of the wit of Voltaire, who returned the compliment by saying, I know, Madam, you perfectly well understand what wit is; but I must be allowed to be a connoisseur in beauty, and I am at present in raptures.

He complimented another very handsome lady, by telling her, Your rivals are master-pieces of art, you are a master-piece of nature.

Three very amiable ladies having been introduced to Voltaire, he requested they would sit down

down; the contour of the Graces, said he, is charming when standing, but much more so when seated.

Notwithstanding the praises Voltaire lavished on Helvetius in the letters he wrote to him, he had no great esteem for his works. This appeared not only by what he said, in conversation, but, still more, by his criticism of his book, entitled *De l'Esprit*, after the death of its author. " No-
 " body can believe, says he, that all minds are
 " equally proper for the sciences, and differ only
 " by education. Nothing has more frequently
 " been proved false by experience. Those who
 " are not destitute of sensibility, are much offend-
 " ed with what this writer had said on friendship,
 " and he, himself, would have rejected, or at
 " least very much softened his expressions, if he
 " had not been carried away by the spirit of
 " systematizing. It were to be wished, likewise, that
 " this work were more methodical, and contained
 " fewer trifling remarks, the greater part of which
 " are without foundation." Voltaire charges that author with emphatically repeating common-place ideas, though he had before represented this very writer as superior to Boileau, and has said to him,
 " You excel so much in my own profession,
 " that I dare not exercise it after you."

Voltaire, on his return to Paris, was greatly surpris'd at the absurd and affected jargon he heard in all companies ; at the conceit with which those of the most despicable capacities seated themselves on the throne of criticism ; at the assuming familiarity of the greater part of young persons, and at that spirit of contradiction, only to be equalled by their ignorance, in which they indulged. He was above all offended at their punning in his presence ; he considered this practice as destructive of conversation, the bane of good taste, and the wit only of those who have none. He said to the ingenious Madame du Deffant : Let us combine to destroy this monster, which thus tyrannizes over the polite world. But Voltaire did not live long enough to effect its destruction ; this deformed tyrant still reigns, at Paris, under the name of Charade.

Voltaire could ill accommodate himself to that extreme insignificance which predominates so continually in the conversation of women. Happening once to be in company with some very elegant ladies, or who believed themselves such at least, after having discussed all the topics of the moment, they began to talk of their dress, and enter minutely into the merit of each others caps
and

and ribbands. One among them remarked, that Madame de * * had on a pair of shoes most exquisitely elegant : pray, Madam, said she, who is your shoemaker ? He is a divine man !—An admirable man !—An unparalleled man ! Voltaire, who was present, at last began to lose his patience, and said, with some peevishness, “ Indeed, Ladies, “ you talk in a very extraordinary style. A shoemaker an unparalleled man ! What terms pray “ would you employ to speak of the greatest man “ in the nation ? ”—Voltaire has extremely well described the manners of the greater part of women in his *Vie de Paris & de Versailles*, in which, he says, they——

In seeming raptures altogether,
Tattle of sermons, cards, and weather ;
Exhaust their lab’ring souls with laws,
To regulate the price of gauze.
What colours match best, blue or pink,
And fang because they cannot think.

All kinds of games, except chess, appeared to him very insipid. He acknowledged them inventions absolutely necessary for those who had neither business nor other diversion, and who had but that resource.

Soon as the cards appear, behold,
Fop, fool, peer, priest, seer, cit, young, old,

With

With ardent eye devour the pack;
 And stake their bliss on red and black;
 Fill up the horrid void of thought,
 With battles all by avarice fought.

He knew the danger of play by experience, having lost ten thousand livres (above four hundred pounds) at Biribi.

Voltaire, on his last arrival at Paris, was stopped at the *Barrières*, by the Officers of the Revenue, who enquired whether he had any thing in his carriage liable to pay duty. Gentlemen, replied he, there is nothing contraband here, except myself.

Though Voltaire affected to have a great respect for the profession of an actor, it is probable he had not much more esteem for it than those who have represented it as not very honorable. Le Kain, when young, having solicited he would procure him admission into the Royal Company of Comedians, he replied, Ah ! my friend, never engage in the profession. Act for your amusement, but never make acting your business.

Yet Voltaire shewed every outward mark of respect to the comedians. When they came to compliment him, on his arrival at Paris, he said to them, "I shall henceforth only live for you, and
 by

by you." M. Linguet thought this answer very singular, and has questioned the truth of the anecdote; but it is certain, that, however strange it may appear, it is no less true.

In a letter to a certain performer, are these words, which he has been often known to repeat in conversation. " I look on your art as one of those which do the highest honor to our country, and merit the greatest respect."

Such a declaration does not well agree with his answer to Le Kain; an answer much to be approved, both from a regard to the manners of the nation, and the opinion of the public, which is not very favorable to the profession of a comedian. One of the statutes of the French Academy is, not to receive any one into their body who has exercised it. This was, indeed, dispensed with in the case of Dubelloi, who, having performed on a stage six hundred leagues from Paris, it was not known, at least every one might pretend not to know, that he had ever been an actor.

Though Voltaire sometimes behaved with so much respect to actors and actresses, he did not always treat them with the same ceremony. One day, when his Irene was performing at the house of the Marquis de Villette, a celebrated actress reciting her part rather negligently, Voltaire said to her, " Really, Mademoiselle, it is unnecessary
" for

“ for me to write verses of fix feet, if you gulp
“ down three of them.”

Le Kain, himself, when he has been playing Orosmanes at Fernei, has heard the poet saying in a low voice, when he thought he did not perform with sufficient feeling, *comique, comique*. An actor, of the name of Frere, having requested to play the part of Gengis Khan, in the Orphan of China, and sometimes falling into inanimated monotony ; Voltaire muttered between his teeth, “ *Frere Gengis*, “ *Frere Gengis* (Friar Gengis).” He told Sarrafin, when he recited a scene of Brutus in too languid a manner, “ You seem to be saying, O holy virgin ! “ grant I may get a hundred pounds prize in the “ lottery.” Another actor, who possessed a good voice, but no great understanding, pronounced these verses in a flat and insipid manner ;

Instant the Conqueror peaceful shall appear ;
The truce proclaim'd, he comes : behold him here !

“ Yes, says Voltaire, the Conqueror is coming ;
“ but you announce him as if you should say, Stand
“ out of the way, don't you see the Cow.”

Voltaire was greatly attached to M. Turgot, First Minister of the Finances, who had, he said, begun his career by becoming the father of the people.

people. He wrote to Madame de Maurepas : " If ever M. Turgot leaves his place, I shall turn Monk in despair." When that minister was disgraced by M. de Clugni, Madame de Maurepas reminded Voltaire of what he had said. " Very true, Madam, replied he, I am become a Monk of Clugni."

The Abbé de Lille, whom Voltaire used to call Publius Virgilius de Lille, was at Fernei, when the disgrace of M. Turgot was made public. Voltaire knew well the regard the Translator of the Georgics had for that minister. He immediately quoted these words, from the ode of Horace to Virgil, on the death of Quintilius :

*Multis ille bonis flebilis occidit :
Nulli flebilior quàm tibi, Virgili.*

How did the good, the virtuous mourn,
And pour their sorrows o'er his urn ?
But, Virgil, thine the loudest strain.

FRANCIS.

When Voltaire came to Paris, M. Turgot hastened to see him. He was then very much troubled with the gout, which had rendered him hardly able to move his legs. After the first compliments, Voltaire, turning towards the company, said, " When I look on M. Turgot, I think I see " the statue of Nebuchadnezzar." " Yes; the feet of
" clay,

"clay, replied the minister."—"And the head of gold! the head of gold!" returned Voltaire.

At the age of eighty-four, Voltaire passed whole nights in correcting his tragedy of Irene. He told the actress who was to perform the principal character: "I have been laboring for you all night, as if I were a young man of twenty." When this enthusiastic ardor was abated, he said to some of his friends—Do you not think me very childish?—In short, his passion for admiration and applause sometimes bordered on puerility. A young painter, who had been sometime at Fernei, coming to give him the first information of the success of his Irene; Voltaire, who was then in bed, caught him in his arms, rolled over him, and exclaimed in all the agitation of vanity completely gratified, "Have I then the happiness to please the public in my old age, as much as I pleased it in my youth!"

Voltaire was a member of almost all the academies of Europe, though he did not think that academies had ever given birth to any great discoveries in philosophy, or produced any great genius in eloquence, poetry, or painting. He long

long continued to publish several things against the French Academy, which had preferred the verses of the Abbé du Jarri to his ode. Can we wonder that those who possess real abilities, will not write for the prize of an academy which judges so ill ?

He says, in a letter to the Abbé Mouffinot, who had sent him the collection of Prize Poems of the French Academy, instead of the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences. “ You have mistaken the
 “ wretched French Academy for the Academy of
 “ Sciences. A man once, who had sent for eight-
 “ teen swans, (eignes) to put into his canal, re-
 “ ceived, in stead of them, eighteen monkeys,
 “ (finges). I seem to have gotten thirty-one
 “ monkies instead of the eighteen swans I wanted.
 “ Pray let me beg of you to procure me the
 “ volumes of the real Academy, and I will return
 “ you the fulsome compliments of this insipid
 “ French Academy.”

He afterwards spoke in a very different manner of this body, when it was composed of his own admirers. He represented it as an assembly of the first men in the nation, and an honor to literature.

He thought less favorably of the Academies in the Provinces, which often produce men useful in the magistracy, the army, or the church, though but
 few

few distinguished in the polite arts. He therefore very little regarded their frequent offers of admission.

He was a member of the Academy of Bourdeaux; though, in his *Candide*, he has indulged in rather a severe pleasantry, on that body, and the futility of the questions proposed by them. Yet a collection of the prize pieces of this Academy, which has produced several men of the greatest merit, would be very interesting.

The Academy of Angers had admitted him one of their number; nevertheless, in all his satirical pieces against Freron, he always put, after the name of Master Aliboron, (which that ingenious critic so little deserved) the title, *Of the Academy of Angers*.

He wrote to Visclede, Secretary to the Academy of Marseilles, that he loved Academies, but that he loved Republics still more. This is a proof of the little esteem in which he held the honors shewn him by these literary societies in the provinces.

A member of the Academy of C * *, was recounting to him one day all its privileges, and concluded with saying, "It was the eldest daughter of the French Academy:" "Yes," said Voltaire, in reply, "She is certainly a good girl, for her exploits have never been much talked of."

He.

He was more fond of being admitted into foreign Academies than those of France, and was particularly vain of the title of Fellow of the Royal Society of London. He was also a member of several Italian Academies. That of the Arcades, which is one of the most celebrated, being desirous to distinguish Voltaire, gave him the surname of *Musæo*, meaning the Poet : or, THE FAVORITE OF THE MUSES.

Voltaire was much dissatisfied at never having seen Rome. That city, he would frequently say, has always been the capital of Europe ; but his extreme licentiousness in speaking and thinking, which was his ruling passion in the latter years of his life, ~~neither permitted him to go to Venice, where he would have been watched by the Inquisitors of the State ; nor to Rome, where he would have been in danger from those of the Holy Office.~~ He dared not even trust himself in Savoy. He had for more than twenty years desired to take the benefit of the waters of Aix, and had asked permission of the court of Turin, but received for answer, from the King of Sardinia, that his dominions were open to all who had been guilty of no crime, and that he had therefore only to examine his conscience. It is well known, however,

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that

that orders had been given to arrest him. This Prince, whom he called the Gaoler of the Alps, would have taken sufficient care to provide for his security. Voltaire, therefore, did not dare to expose himself to the resentment of so religious a Monarch, who had often complained he was already but too near his territories.

Voltaire often repeated, *Qui bene latuit bene vixit*, but this maxim had no place in his heart. No person was more jealous of his fame, or less avoided malignity and envy, by silence and retirement. I, he would sometimes say, am like the husband of a coquette, whom every one enjoys more than himself.

Oeconomy, he has often declared, is the source of liberality; and this maxim he reduced to practice much more effectually than his Latin one.

Amid that barbarism into which the fine arts are beginning to fall, it is fortunate that we have had some writers who have defended the cause of true taste. Voltaire was of the number. He gave no quarter to that affected and absurd jargon which destroys all propriety of metaphor, and strength
of

of sentiment; nor to that ridiculous mixture of plain and poetical language, which disfigures the works of several of our prose authors. He has somewhere said in ridicule of this wretched taste,

Euclid in blank verse let us see;
In fustian dress philosophy;
And, since ideas thus you want,
Astonish fools with sound and rant;
Batter our ears with words, and bellow,
To prove Racine a silly fellow.

But what deprived him of all patience, was, to find declamation and bombast employed to give importance to things, in themselves, of little consequence. He ridiculed, and with reason, the style of those authors who accompany every word with an epithet. It were to be wished, said he, we could make these gentlemen understand that redundancy is actual poverty; and the adjective often the greatest enemy to the substantive, though they agree so well in number, gender, and case.

He was a great admirer of Mademoiselle Clairon; I knew not, says he, in one of his letters, the merit of this actress; I had not even an idea of such finished and animated acting. I had been accustomed to the cold declamation of our cold

theatres, and had only seen actors who began to spout, as soon as they heard the cue, before an audience of petits maitres.

He confessed, however, he had never seen the true pathetic, in tragic acting, till Madame Dumesnil appeared. "Baron, said he, was noble and elegant. Mademoiselle le Couvreur possessed grace, simplicity, and propriety. But we first beheld true pathos in Madame Dumesnil; when, in *Méropé*, with distraction in her eyes, and suffocation in her voice, she lifted her palsied hand to stab her child." He preferred extravagance in acting to frigidity. "On the stage (said he, addressing himself equally to the poet and the actor) it is frequently better to strike forcibly than justly."

What Voltaire has said of some persons, in power, may with great justice be applied to himself. "When you wait on them in the morning, you should enquire, of their valet, what news from the water-closet." It is certain his temper was very unequal, and altered according as he had rested at night, or digested his supper. It is not therefore surprising there should be so great a disagreement in the accounts given by different travellers, of the reception they met with, from the philosopher, at Fernei.

If

If he was in one of his good-humored moments, they were come to raise him from the dead. He had no life in him, but they had restored him to existence. But if want of sleep, or pain, or too great application to any favorite study, rendered him displeased with his visitors, he was not to be seen: or, if he shewed himself, for a moment, it was only to express his impatience, and to give vent to a few severe and satirical repartees. More incommoded than flattered, by the crouds who came to visit him out of curiosity, and to say, they had seen him, he frequently received them with moroseness. "These people, said he, to Madame Denis, take me for the wild beast of the Gevaudan. Say, I am not at home. Say I am dead."

When this little pettishness was over, Voltaire was in fact of a good disposition, and easily managed by those about him. He permitted, during a part of the winter, a noisy dancing, among his domestics, in a hall adjoining to his apartment. He gave way to the whims of an old housekeeper, and repeatedly excused the offences of a drunken servant, who was perpetually threatened and never punished. "At bottom, said he, to the Abbé Trublet, I am undoubtedly a good kind of man."

Y 3

And

And this was true, at certain times. The same has been said of many other men of letters, of too irascible a character. But they had this advantage over Voltaire, that their passions and ill humors were confined to their domestics, while the sage of Fernei, giving himself up in his satires to his desire of revenge, posterity will be induced to believe his resentment was as durable as violent. It is to no purpose to alledge, that his being so often attacked, by the critics, had rendered him too irritable; and that there is a vanity, which, when wounded, admits of no cure.

He never forgave Freron. Next to flattery, the most certain method of putting him in a good humor, was to inform him of some epigram against that Journalist. One day, walking in his garden with a gentleman from Geneva, the latter perceiving a toad, said to him, "There is a Freron." "What has that poor animal done to you, replied Voltaire, that you should abuse it in that manner?"

He allowed, notwithstanding, that this toad of Parnassus possessed real good taste, and pointed him out, to a nobleman of Turin, as the person who best could give him a just idea of the new publications which appeared in France.

He

He even endeavored to conciliate his favor, and wrote several letters to M. Morand, the celebrated surgeon, to desire he would persuade Freron to soften his criticisms; but he, prejudiced against Voltaire by the Abbé des Fontaines, always defied the author of the *Henriade*, and often made himself dreaded.

The private and real opinion Voltaire entertained of the works of several writers, whom he flattered, was nearly the same with that which Freron openly avowed in his critical publications: This ought to have reconciled them: but many reasons prevented their union. Persons may possess the same principles of taste, and yet, by particular circumstances, be forced into widely different parties. When we read the following passage, in Voltaire, it cannot be doubted but that he and Freron thought the same of the greatest part of books, with which we are inundated. "Good authors, says he, employ no more wit than is necessary; their thoughts are never far fetched; but conceived with good sense, and expressed with perspicuity. At present our writers seem to deal in enigmas, nothing is simple, but every thing affected and unnatural."

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The

The friends of Voltaire continually endeavored to cure him of his extreme susceptibility at the slightest criticism, by reminding him of the great fame he had acquired. When he was last at Paris, somebody having said to him, "You cannot but allow the homage you receive ought to be considered as a sufficient amends for the feeble attacks which have been made on your fame." "Yes, replied he, I am like Spartacus, astonished at my own glory!"

This glory was in fact prejudicial to him; the continual visits and compliments he was obliged to receive injured his health. He confessed, himself, that he was stifled with roses, and had always foreseen this embarrassment and danger in the capital's visit.

"Paris, (says he, in a letter written to Madame de Chambrin in 1745) is a gulph, which swallows up all peace and rest of mind, where life is one continual tumult. I am drawn into the whirlpools of irregularity in spite of myself. I go and come; I sup at one end of the city, one evening, to sup the next at another. From the society of three or four friends I am obliged to hurry to the opera or the comedy. I am forced to see rarities, like a stranger; to embrace a hundred persons in a day, and make and receive a hundred protestations.

“ tations. I have not a moment to myself, not
 “ time to write, think, or sleep. I am like those
 “ who were put to death by being smothered
 “ with flowers.”

If this continual round of honor and pleasure fatigued him so much at fifty, what effect could it be expected to produce on him when laboring under all the infirmities of eighty, and when tranquillity and temperance were absolutely necessary? His death therefore followed close on his glory.

While Voltaire sacrificed to the Muses, on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, he had rivals, in Switzerland, who, though not his equals in reputation, were probably far more happy, because they peaceably enjoyed their virtues and their fame. At the head of these respectable men was Bodmer, the Nestor of Switzerland, and the Patriarch of German literature. Intimately acquainted with the Grecian writers, he taught his countrymen to imitate their beauties. Every branch of the Belles Letters is equally indebted to him. I have seen (says Mr. Coxe *) with affection and respect, this old man, almost eighty, who still pre-

* After the most careful examination we can find no such passage in Coxe's Switzerland, and know not where else to look.

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serves

serves the fire and gaiety of youth. His resemblance to Voltaire appeared to me striking ; the same features, the same face, the same gestures. The color of his eyes only is a little different, and his features, taken altogether, are somewhat more delicate. I mentioned this astonishing conformity, and he made me the following remarkable reply : *My fame would be fully compleat, if I every way resembled M. de Voltaire ; but perhaps he would be happier, if he more resembled me.*

The same canton, Zurich, which has produced Bodmer, has given birth to Gefner, author of the celebrated poem of the Death of Abel. He has, for some time, renounced poetry, to cultivate painting, and he is preparing an edition of his works, in quarto ; every decoration of which is to be entirely his own : he is at once the designer and engraver of the plates. This excellent writer possesses an affability and modesty which render him the delight of all his countrymen,

Haller, like the fabulous god Apollo, added poetical abilities to a profound knowledge of medicine. He is esteemed the *Pope* of Germany. He has successfully imitated the bold and nervous style

style of the English poet, and his philosophy is perhaps preferable to his works of imagination.

The mildness of his character made him pity those literati, who endeavor to destroy the reputation of every competitor. He especially shunned being drawn into any literary contest. When Voltaire complained to him of Grasset, he blamed him for suffering such a trifle to give him so much uneasiness. " Providence, said he, I perceive, distributes its favors with an equal hand. It has lavished on you both riches and glory; but the equilibrium is maintained by your too great sensibility. If wishes were of any avail, I would form one which should restore you that tranquillity, so seldom attendant on genius, and you should become, at once, the most celebrated and the happiest man in Europe."

The violence of Voltaire's character prevented Haller from maintaining any great intimacy with him. The dislike he entertained to the man, would not suffer him to esteem the writer; of this Voltaire was not ignorant. One day, as he was praising Haller in the presence of a flatterer, who lived with that celebrated naturalist, " Ah, Sir, (said the deceitful friend of Haller) how much is it to be wished, he would speak thus of your works." Voltaire directly replied, " Perhaps we may be both mistaken."

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In fact, Haller, both as a practical philosopher and a man, was much superior to Voltaire. The cause of truth and reason was defended by his writings, and religion honored by his life. Being elected to a share of the government of Bern, he wisely tempered justice with mildness and mercy.

Good taste, or a ready perception of a fault among beauties, or a beauty among faults, was, in the opinion of Voltaire, a quality partly natural and partly acquired ; but he lamented the prodigious number of human creatures, especially in cold and moist climates, who have not, and scarcely can acquire, the smallest spark of this taste. To obtain it, we must have a perfect knowledge of the best authors ; and to relish the beauties of their writings, we must understand every nicety of the language in which they have been written.

“ This knowledge, said Voltaire, is not to be hastily acquired. It is at first a labor and not a pleasure. It resembles those games which afford no amusement till we have made some proficiency. I have known several strangers, at Paris, unable to distinguish between the style of Racine and that of Danchet. I have seen them buy new romances instead of *Zaïde*, and have remarked, in several foreign countries, the persons who are best informed have not always the justest taste, since

“ I have

“ I have frequently heard them quote, with much
 “ satisfaction, the least striking passages in their ce-
 “ lebrated authors, not being able to distinguish the
 “ real diamonds from the counterfeit.

“ Taste is the lot only of a small number of
 “ distinguished minds. The employments which
 “ depend on chicane, finance, or commerce, are
 “ commonly inimical to the fine arts. It is the dis-
 “ grace of the human mind, that taste is only to be
 “ found in a kind of opulent idleness. I knew a
 “ clerk in the public offices at Versailles, who had
 “ an excellent understanding, and would frequent-
 “ ly say, I am very unfortunate, I have not time
 “ to acquire a good taste.”

A few defects in taste, could not prevent Vol-
 taire from doing justice to genius. Notwithstand-
 ing the criticisms of Boileau, he was always an
 admirer of Tasso, whose great poetic talents en-
 tirely hide a few defects. He was a still greater
 admirer of Ariosto. An Abbé, who was his in-
 timate acquaintance, returning from Italy, asked
 Voltaire, “ Whether he did not think Ariosto
 “ a great poet.” “ A great poet,” replied Vol-
 taire, with vivacity, “ He is the greatest of poets.
 “ His Orlando is an enchanted palace, in which the
 “ grotesque is mixed with the majestic, without
 “ either

“ either degrading the other. It is at once the
“ Iliad, the Odyssey, and Don Quixote.”

As to Taffo, he thought him, in many respects,
superior to Homer, especially in the descriptions
of his battles. “ How forcible, said Voltaire,
“ and affecting are his pictures ! How just and ani-
“ mated his style ! How much inferior are the ge-
“ nerality of our French poets to this great man.
“ La Motte has translated the Iliad with as much
“ coldness as if it had been the Enchiridion of
“ Epictetus.”

An author cannot always submit to the censures
of his friends. Somebody having advised Voltaire
to make several alterations in one of his pieces,
“ There are, said he, constitutional diseases ; a per-
“ son who has a hunch back, cannot be cured of it ;
“ my child has a hunch, yet he is in very good
“ health.”

Critical censures generally rendered him peevish,
and he seldom replied to them but by a repartee.

Fontenelle, after the first representation of Oe-
dipus, said to the author, some previous compli-
ments having been paid : “ I could wish your
“ verse were not quite so pompous, it would be
“ more easy and flowing, and better suited to
“ tragedy.”

“tragedy.” “Sir,” replied Voltaire, that is a fault I intend to correct, and with that view will go directly and read your Pastorals.”

After having read his tragedy of Eriphile to the Abbé des Fontaines, he asked him, “Well, how do you find it?—I do not think it a very good one.” “So much the better, it is therefore excellent.” But on this occasion, the public and the Abbé were of the same opinion.

On the first performance of one of his tragedies, the success of which was very equivocal, the Abbé Pellegrin complained loudly that Voltaire had stolen some verses from him. “How can you, who are so rich, said he, thus seize upon the property of another?” “What! replied Voltaire, have I stolen from you? I no longer wonder that my piece has met with so little approbation.”

When Piron said to him, after the representation of his *Semiramis*, which had been much criticised by a great part of the spectators. “You would have been very glad if I had written this piece;” “Yes, replied Voltaire, I am still so much your friend.”

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He did not approve the poetry of Piron. Le Kain, when very young, intending to give him a specimen of his declamation, proposed a scene in Piron's *Gustavus*. "No, no, said Voltaire, I hate bad verses: repeat what you can remember from Racine." Piron knew Voltaire's contempt of his tragedies, and he the less forgave him, as he had been on some occasions desirous to eclipse him.

We cannot always perform ourselves, said Voltaire, what we advise our friends, and there are people hardy and vain enough to undertake any thing. A man of letters having altered some verses, in the tragedy of *Irene*, shewed them to the poet. M. Perroneau, who built the magnificent bridge of Neuville, was present. "Ah! Monsieur Perroneau, said Voltaire, how unfortunate it is you are not acquainted with this gentleman; he would have added another arch to your bridge."

Voltaire, from the first moment the Spirit of Laws appeared, seems to have declared war against that work. In his *Remercimens à un homme charitable* (Thanks to a charitable man) he speaks of it as destitute of depth, perspicuity, method, or meaning. This book, which ought to have been useful, was, said he, only entertaining. The same things

things said by another as learned, or even more learned than the author, would not have been read.

He saw the writer of the Persian Letters in it; nothing more: he shut his eyes on the profound legislator. Thiriot asking him "What he thought of that celebrated work," he replied, "It is Harlequin Grotius." He repeated the jest of Madame du Defant (*C'est de l'Esprit sur les loix*) It is wit concerning laws. Michael Montaigne turned legislator.

However he confessed, some time after, that, among a hundred paradoxes, there were a hundred useful truths, expressed with energy: and that the author's very errors were respectable, because, they evidently proceeded from a love of freedom, and a heart deeply impressed with a sense of the rights of humanity. In short, that if he sometimes seemed to fall, it was but to soar still higher.

Montesquieu, perhaps, did not think even thus favorably of Voltaire. He considered him as a man of wit and imagination; but thought him frequently betrayed into errors by those brilliant endowments. "Voltaire, says he, somewhere, has too much wit to understand me. When he reads a book he affixes to it a new meaning of his own, and afterwards writes against that meaning."

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Those

Those who were intimate with the President de Montesquieu, know, that he described our poet as a man of a passionate and violent disposition; and the writings of La Beaumelle, whose patron and friend he was, did not at all incline him to change his opinion. "A good heart is better than a witty head," said Montesquieu, in one of his letters relative to the disgrace of Voltaire at Berlin.

Montesquieu's declamation against poets and poetry, in his Persian Letters, had no doubt irritated Voltaire. "He had, says the poet, the paltry
 "vanity to believe, that Homer and Virgil are cy-
 "phers, when compared to one who has success-
 "fully imitated the *Siamois* of Dufresni, and who
 "has filled a book with bold assertions, without
 "which it would never have been read. He asks,
 "What is an epic poem, and replies, He does
 "not know. Then says, he despises lyric com-
 "positions as much as he admires tragedies.
 "He ought not, however, to despise Pindar and
 "Horace. Aristotle did not despise Pindar."

More than one prose writer have, like Montesquieu, pretended to despise poetry.—We may apply to such the remark of Montaigne. We cannot attain to it, let us avenga ourselves by de-
 crying it.

Voltaire was offended with those who were of opinion tragedy might be written in prose, because, as they said, epic poems had been so written; and the continual return of masculine and feminine rhimes produced a languid monotony. "It is true, said he, rhyme only renders indifferent poetry still more tiresome. The poet, then, resembles an unskilful mechanic, who, while the automaton moves, suffers the noise of his springs and pulleys to be heard. The reader is as much fatigued by his rhimes as he himself was while inventing them. His verses consist merely in the jingling of syllables. But if both his thoughts and his rhimes are happy, he at once experiences and communicates a pleasure which can only be tasted by a feeling mind and a musical ear."

Voltaire, when he grew in years, sometimes neglected purity of style and propriety of expression. He was less careful and less correct; either because he had contracted a kind of indolence through age, or confided in his great reputation, or else had experienced that the success of a work, even in verse, does not depend, provided it possesses intrinsic merit, on a trifling incorrectness of style. But age could not abate the warmth of his

imagination, for he still preserved, in his latter productions, all the fire of his earlier compositions.

Among his poetical cotemporaries, in other nations, he honored none with entire approbation, except Pope and Metastasio. When proposals were sent him for a subscription to the works of the latter; "I could wish, said he to the editor, that my name might be placed at the head of the subscribers, in despite of the alphabet."

Like the senator, Pococurante, he thought very little of the German poets, who describe Nature with propriety and simplicity: but are too profuse in common-place images.

'All partial evil universal good,' is a verse of Pope's, and contains the whole system of optimism; a system contrary to the doctrine of The Fall of Man, and which has been refuted by several divines. Voltaire also has ridiculed it, though not for the same reasons.

"That, says he, is a strange universal good which is composed of the evils suffered by individuals. What can be more unintelligible? What can be meant when we are told, All is for the best. Is it for the best with respect to us? Certainly not. Is it with respect to God?" Un-

“ Undoubtedly God neither suffers nor enjoys
 “ our evils. What then in fact is this platonic
 “ notion? A chaos, like that of all other sys-
 “ tems, though into it diamonds have been cast.
 “ The lives of those who in England were loudest
 “ in exclaiming, *All is for the best*, did not prove
 “ the truth of their doctrine. Shaftesbury, who
 “ first brought it into fashion, was a very unfor-
 “ tunate man. I have seen Bolingbroke a prey
 “ to vexation and rage, and Pope, whom he em-
 “ ployed to put this wretched system into verse,
 “ was the man most to be pitied of any I have
 “ known; misshapen in body, dissatisfied in mind,
 “ always ill, always a burthen to himself, and
 “ harassed by a hundred enemies to his very last
 “ moment. Let those at least be fortunate and
 “ prosperous who tell us, *All is for the best*.

“ Man is a very miserable being, who enjoys a
 “ few hours of relaxation, and short intervals of
 “ satisfaction, amid a life of calamity. ‘ Man
 “ that is born of a woman is of few days, and
 “ full of trouble; he cometh up and is cut down
 “ like a flower, he fleeth like a shadow and con-
 “ tinueth not.’ This was said by Job three thou-
 “ sand years ago, and human nature has not since
 “ undergone any material alteration.”

Voltaire compared the framers of systems to those who dance a minuet, who are in continual motion without advancing a step, and who conclude by returning to the place from whence they set out.

"The greatest admirer of a great writer, says the Abbé Trublet, is commonly himself; and Voltaire, who was the first French author of the age, was also the most egregious literary Narcissus." I cannot conceive how the Marquis de Luchet could assert, "That Voltaire never spoke of his own works." Mr. Sherlock, more sincere, or less political, remarks, on the contrary, "That Voltaire always spoke with the greatest heat of his own productions," and those who have lived with him have had frequent opportunities of making the same observation with that ingenious English traveller.

Voltaire was not only highly irritated by any criticisms on his writings, but not a little offended by praises, when subject to any restriction.

"The mind of this extraordinary man, says Mr. Sherlock, teemed with every kind of ambition; but literary ambition was most predominant: nothing could subdue it." Fontenelle, says

says the Abbé Trublet, was much better satisfied with the public than Voltaire, and would neither have changed with him his reputation or his character. It is certain he was naturally more disposed to be contented. There is a self-satisfaction which arises from vanity, presumption, and an ignorance of the real value of things. There is another which proceeds from moderation, modesty, and reason : the latter was not possessed by Voltaire.

It is to be remembered, said Voltaire, and he has repeated the remark in one of his *Diatribæ*, that the author of a work of merit should beware of three things; the Title, the Epistle Dedicatory, and the Preface. Yet have we known an author, says M. Luchet, who has given to his works the most ridiculous titles, who has written fourteen Epistles Dedicatory, and eleven Prefaces.—
Thou art the man.

Or sage or wit, or you who wish to be,
 Without a master live, if you'd live free.

Said Voltaire after he left Prussia : He ought to have said so before he went thither.

Be resolute, said La Beaumelle to him, and at length be free; for hitherto you have only complimented liberty. He himself said, sometime after,

Oft was I false to her I most adore;
 I've seen my error, and am false no more:
 I knew not blifs till, tir'd of Slav'ry grown,
 I dar'd to live for Liberty, alone.

We are often more prejudiced in favor of names than things. Voltaire used frequently to relate that several of the principal wits of France (among others the Prince of Vendome, the Chevalier de Bouillon, the Abbé de Buffi, who had more understanding than his father, and several companions of Bachaumont, Chapelle, and the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos) supping together, were speaking against La Motte Houdart all in their power. The fables of that author had just been published, and were treated by this company with the utmost contempt. They asserted, he was wholly unable to approach the excellence of the most indifferent fable of La Fontaine. Voltaire then mentioned an edition of La Fontaine, lately published, and talked of several new fables added from the papers of Madame de Bouillon; one of which he pretended to recite. Accordingly

ingly they were all in transport, and exclaimed,
 “ How different from the style of La Motte !
 “ What precision ! What elegance ! Every
 “ word proves it to be La Fontaine’s.” Vol-
 taire had been laughing at them. The fable was
 really by La Motte.

Voltaire, by relating this anecdote, did not detract from the merit of La Fontaine, at least of those things, by La Fontaine, which are really good. He did not think, and, in this, impartial judges are of the same opinion, that all his fables have equal merit. Persons of taste will never confound his fable of the two Pigeons with that of the Grasshopper and the Ant, or that of the Crow and the Fox. What children are taught to repeat should possess the greatest simplicity, though it may not have the greatest excellence. The verses which are become Proverbs are not always the most deserving to be remembered. There are things which are in every one’s mouth, though they possess not any great merit : as several trivial songs are frequently sung without being much esteemed. Thus, in the fables of La Fontaine, a man of taste will carefully distinguish between that simplicity which approaches vulgarity, and that natural elegance with which this author abounds. But in whatever manner we
 judge

judge of his works, there is no doubt but he will be as much admired by posterity as he is at present, because his beauties are accommodated to every understanding and every age.

M. Vernet, the Raphael of marine painters, came, as well as many other artists did, to visit Voltaire. You, said the poet to him, in answer to some compliment, cannot miss of immortality: your colors are at once brilliant and durable. ---My colors, replied the painter, are by no means so durable as your ink.

The library of Voltaire was neither so numerous, nor so varied as his fortune and the extent of his knowledge seemed to require. He thought we ought to set bounds to our reading, and that when we had seen a certain number of authors we had seen all.

Those common-place ideas, with which so many books both in prose and verse are filled, appeared to him contemptible. Aurora opening, with her rosy fingers, the gates of the east, and scattering before the chariot of the sun, topazes and pearls; Zephyr caressing Flora; Love playing with the
arm

arms of Mars : the comparing pleasures to roses, and pains to thorns, were, originally, no doubt, the invention of wit and imagination : he who first gave birth to them may be justly considered as a master in eloquence and poetry ; but, at present, all those images have been so frequently used, that he who should again employ them would only be thought a trite declaimer.

In Telemachus, princes are compared to shepherds, bulls, lions, and wolves greedy of carnage. The author had need of all the charms with which his style abounds to prevent these comparisons from becoming insipid. This was the opinion of Voltaire, but more exalted or uncommon images would not, perhaps, have been proper for a work intended for the instruction of a young Prince, who required lessons which might convey instruction in an agreeable manner, and be easily understood.

If we find, in the *Henriade*, comparisons more new and ingenious, it is because Voltaire, coming after Fenelon, could not repeat the same images. Besides he has copied many of his similes from the Italian and English poets ; a circumstance he did not always conceal. He looked
on

on every thing as imitation. The most original writers, said he, borrowed one from another. Boyardo has imitated Pulci, and Ariosto Boyardo. The instruction we find in books is like fire ; we fetch it from our neighbour, kindle it at home, communicate it to others, and it becomes the property of all.

Notwithstanding Voltaire's ambition to be the Alexander of literature, and excel in every department of science, he made several confessions to his friends which would have done honor to his candor, had he made them to the public. In a letter to M. Berger, in 1736, he writes thus, " I have been guilty of folly. I have written " an Opera. But I was hurried away by my " desire to write for so great a man as Rameau. " I considered only *his* genius, and did not perceive that *mine*, if indeed I possess any, was no " way suited to lyric compositions ; and I told " him, not long ago, I would rather have written " an Epic Poem than have undertaken a work " of that kind ; not because I despise this species " of writing, there is none to be despised, but " because it requires talents of which I believe " I am entirely destitute."

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He, however, wrote another work of the same kind, but was obliged to confess he had not succeeded. " Those (writes he in a letter to the Abbé Duvernet) " who told you that, in 1744 " and 1745, I was a courtier, informed you of a " melancholy truth. I was so, and repent my " weakness. Of all the time I have lost in my life, " I certainly regret that the most. This was " not the period of my glory, if indeed I have " ever acquired glory. I raised, however, in " the year 1745, a Temple to Fame. The " work was undertaken by command. The public did not approve the architecture of this temple; nor, indeed, did I myself. Piron turned his rats into it. I might have allotted him his place in the cavern of Envy, which I had described as at the entrance of the temple."

Though Voltaire says he was dissatisfied with the architecture of his temple, it was long after it appeared; for in the first moments of his enthusiasm, he was so pleased with it, that he touched the arm of the late King, saying, " Is Trajan satisfied?" It is to be remarked that Trajan was the hero of this poem, and that, under the name of that Roman Emperor, he intended to celebrate the virtues and courage of Louis XV.

That

That Prince was not ungrateful. The Temple of Fame, and the Princess of Navarre, gained him the place of Gentleman in Ordinary to the Bedchamber. The *Henriade*, *Zaïre*, *Alzire*, and *Mérope*, procured him neither reward nor favor from the King. But as he said himself, honors and riches were showered thick upon him for a wretched farce.

It has been asserted, in a collection of anecdotes, that Voltaire, after having read a work entitled the Soul of Beasts, said, to one of his friends, "The author is an excellent member of society, but not sufficiently acquainted with the history of his species."

Voltaire wrote compliments and flatteries with great facility, and with the same facility forgot what he had written. This many authors have experienced. The learned professor Vernet suffered himself to be deceived by his fawning. When Voltaire first went to reside near Geneva,—“He esteemed both him and his writings—Tronchin should have the care of his body and he of his soul.” Thus, he said, and thus he wrote, yet all these fine compliments were only introductory to the

the grossest abuse. D. Calmet had received Voltaire, at his Abbey, like a friend and a brother. The poet loaded him with compliments: he was an illustrious man, a man profoundly learned. But, after he was dead, he was a madman, a poor creature, a man who had not the least judgment. All the literati in Paris knew Thiriot to be the most violent and indefatigable panegyrist of Voltaire, to whom he had rendered the most essential services: in every letter which the philosopher of Fernei wrote to him, he was his dear friend, and his old friend; yet scarcely had this dear friend closed his eyes, when Voltaire treated him with a kind of contempt, in a letter to the King of Prussia, written in February, 1773. "We shall never find one to replace Thiriot, our historiographer in the coffee-houses. He acquitted himself to admiration in this office. He knew by heart the few good verses and the many bad which were written in Paris. He was, in short, a man very useful to the state."

M. Berger, who had been once one of the confidential correspondents of Voltaire at Cirei, experienced the same inconstancy, as well as many other men of letters; nor is that at all surprising.

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Though Voltaire was very sensible of a service, as well as an offence, this sensibility could not be lasting in one who was incessantly employed in literary labours, who frequently changed his country and connexions, and who was caressed and honored in every company. Those caresses and honors, however, never made him lose sight of his personal interest, and the advancement of his fortune. His genius was always in action. "If I had a hundred bodies, said he one day, I should weary them all." His mind being so loaded with such a variety of occupations, his heart was not always able to act.

Besides, Voltaire frequently took umbrage with very little reason. Thiriot, it is said, not being willing to attest that the Abbé des Fontaines had written libels against him, in 1725, because it was not true, Voltaire began to distrust him. "As
 " we have our good angel, says he, in a letter to
 " Madame Chambonin, so have we also our evil
 " one, and Thiriot performs this office. I know
 " he has done me several injuries, but I will not
 " seem to know it. We ought to have too much
 " respect for ourselves to enter into a dispute
 " with our old friends, and we ought also to be
 " sufficiently discreet not to put it in the power
 of

“ of those who have done us service to do us
“ hurt.”

These are excellent maxims, but Voltaire's disposition was too hasty and violent to permit him to observe them.

After the praises he had bestowed on M. le Brun, who proposed his educating the niece of the great Corneille, who would have expected him to retract whatever he had said to his advantage? And why did he do this? Because M. le Brun had been commended in the Critical Observations of M. Clement, and therefore appeared connected with the author of those strictures on M. de Voltaire,

“ Satire never appears so odious as when it is
“ directed against those whom we have before
“ praised. Such a retraction is only humili-
“ ating to it's author. If he is displeased, with
“ the person he has commended, he ought to
“ keep silence, and not contradict what he has
“ before said, and condemn himself.” This is
Voltaire's own doctrine, when speaking of J. B. Rousseau, we may here again justly exclaim,
Thou art the Man.

We may add, that, as Voltaire frequently altered his opinion of those whom he had mistrusted, he ought to have been on his guard against the first

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emotions of his anger. Notwithstanding his suspicions of Thiriot, he afterwards renewed the strictest friendship with him; and when he was last at Paris, he acknowledged the merit of M. le Brun, who was among the number of those literati who celebrated his return to that capital.

Voltaire, in his youth, had the misfortune to be seduced into a love of gaming. He lost one evening, at the house of Madame de Fontaine Martel, ten thousand livres (above four hundred pounds) at Biribi, as has been already said. Poetry, literature and philosophy cured him of this passion, and he played no more, except at chess: the greater part of those games which we have borrowed from the Spaniards, Italians, or English, appeared to him very insipid.

Voltaire used to relate, as an instance of the bewitching nature of gaming, that he had known an old woman, formerly addicted to play, and extremely indigent, who used to make broth for some other poor players, for the sake of being permitted to look on.

In 1742, he gave, at Brussels, a little entertainment to the Marchioness du Chatelet and some other ladies, who were rather too fond of play. It

was

was expected there would have been a great deal of verse in an entertainment given by a poet. He, however, only exhibited a large firework, which displayed this motto in large and luminous letters, *Je suis du jeu, va tout.* (I play, here goes for all.) " This, said he, in a letter to M. Berger, had no effect on these ladies, though I meant it for their reproof and amendment."

One of Voltaire's greatest pleasures was to read the memoirs of able advocates on interesting causes, or even on those of little consequence, when they were ably treated. He preferred a well written factum (or case) to an indifferent literary work. Yet he considered the style of the bar as no less corrupt than every other. Speaking of a discourse pronounced in parliament, by *Fréind*, he says, " It is a discourse strong and concise, without common-place or epithet; he does not invoke a testimony or a law, he attests and cites them. He does not call a conjecture a demonstration, nor shew disrespect to the august assembly of the parliament by low and contemptible witticisms. In short, he speaks with equal strength and modesty." With respect to the expression, invoking a law, he used to say, " That those who made use of it ought to invoke good taste."

A a 2

Several

Several authors, who have attacked the errors of M. de Voltaire, have written, "That, at the approach of death, he expressed the greatest fear and remorse." Certainly, nothing is more probable, yet M. Luchet pretends, that his regret at leaving life has been construed into a dread of futurity and repentance of the past; that when he was ill in 1765, he took measure for a tomb to be placed near his church at Fernei, saying, "At least, I will not be reproached as destitute of foresight;" and that in this illness he was very merry, and repeated, to those about him, verses from Hudibras, in ridicule of physicians.

These anecdotes may be true, but if Voltaire did not lose his usual gaiety, it must be because he did not believe his illness would prove mortal. On other occasions, when the grave seemed open before him, he was certainly extremely alarmed. When he was ill, at Paris, in 1745, he confessed, and submitted to every reparation his confessor required to expiate the dangerous pieces he had published. He was absolutely in an agony, as we have been assured by M. Tronchin, his physician, and other persons worthy of credit.

Besides, lively imaginations are naturally inclined to religion, especially if they have early imbibed

imbibed the principles of piety. This reflexion, alone, is sufficient to prevent our believing that Voltaire expected his last moments with all that tranquillity and indifference some of his admirers have pretended: though others confess that, at such times, he suffered the most violent agitations.

Resolution and firmness of soul was not the most conspicuous quality in Voltaire. We appeal to any of his partisans, who coolly and impartially consider his character. As soon as he had published a book, which might endanger his tranquillity, or his liberty, he made disavowal after disavowal: he left nothing untried; and even wrote to those authors who had criticised his works, and whom he pretended most to despise. The following is one of his letters to the Abbé Coger, professor of rhetoric in the Mazarin College:

“ It is a great pity, Sir, that you should calumniate men and academicians, with whom
 “ you are so little acquainted. In your *critique*
 “ on Belisarius you have considered me as the
 “ author of a Poem on Natural Religion: I have
 “ never written any poem with such a title.
 “ About thirty years ago I wrote one on Natural

A a 3

“ Law,

“ Law, which is widely different. You likewise
 “ impute to me the Philosophical Dictionary, the
 “ work of a society of literati in which I had
 “ not the smallest share. You have dared to
 “ make an improper use of his Majesty’s name,
 “ by saying, he expressed the greatest indig-
 “ nation against this book, to the President Hénaut
 “ and to M. Capperonier. I have now before
 “ me a letter, from the President Hénaut, which
 “ assures me, this shameless report is false. As
 “ to M. Capperonier, I call his veracity to wit-
 “ ness, that there is no truth in what has been
 “ said. You have wished to insult and destroy
 “ an old man of seventy-four years of age, who
 “ in his retirement only employs himself in do-
 “ ing good.”

The Abbé Coger answered him in a letter which
 admitted of no reply. Though he acknowledged
 the good done by Voltaire, on his estate, he did
 not fail to animadvert on the dangerous tendency
 of his writings. As to the indignation expressed
 by Louis XV. against the author of the Philoso-
 phical Dictionary, it had been witnessed by more
 than twenty persons, even according to the con-
 fession of the President Hénaut, who, willing to
 conceal from Voltaire a disagreeable and alarming
 truth, had written him a civil, but vague letter,
 which

which he pretended to understand as a denial of all that had been asserted.

Some partisans of Voltaire may perhaps wish we had concealed these truths, but we may say of him as he has himself said of Corneille. "What good can I do him by flattering him, or what harm by speaking the truth? Have I undertaken a panegyric, or a work of public utility? Truth is preferable to Corneille, and we ought not to deceive the living out of respect for the dead."

The most enthusiastic admirers of Voltaire would not certainly wish his principles to be adopted by their wives and their valets. The author of a certain periodical publication assures us, that a nobleman, at court, who yet valued himself on being a freethinker, dismissed his valet de chambre because he surprised him reading the Philosophical Dictionary, telling him, "That it was of the utmost consequence, to him, that his wife and his domestics should believe in a God." "What would become of us, said the Abbé Rothelin one day to Voltaire, if our servants should adopt the maxims you advance?"

Voltaire has said himself, addressing those authors who deny eternal punishments; "Gentle-

A a 4

men,

“ men, all the world are not philosophers, we
 “ have to do with a number of knaves who never
 “ give themselves the trouble to reflect, with a
 “ multitude of thieves, drunkards, and brutal
 “ persons; preach to them, if you please, that
 “ there is no hell; for my part, I will perpetually
 “ sound in their ears they will be damned
 “ if they rob me.” This doctrine he actually
 did preach, one Sunday, in the church at Fernei;
 but his sermon must appear too inconsistent, to a
 great part of his audience, for them to receive
 much benefit from his pious labours.

It was not merely because he was his rival that
 he disliked Crebillon: he styled his versification
 barbarous—“ *Electra* and *Rhadamistes* are the
 “ only two of his Pieces, said he, that a man
 “ who has the least ear can endure to read; the
 “ rest are written in a style totally incorrect. They
 “ are filled with unconnected periods, inflated
 “ common-place, and long apostrophes to the
 “ gods, because he knew not how to address
 “ men.” He wished all dramatic poets to write
 like Racine, or form themselves after his man-
 ner; but this is requiring a little too much, and
 treating rather too harshly a rival, whose pencil
 may not be soft, but whose colors tho’ gloomy,
 are truly tragical.

If

If he seemed to slight the eloquence of J. J. Rousseau, it was because, in the midst of the most striking beauties, there is sometimes a mixture of bombast and declamation; with far-fetched thoughts obscurely and incorrectly expressed. It must indeed be confessed, that when we read the work of an enemy, we regard the most trivial faults more than the greatest beauties. Voltaire was most severe on his *Eloise*, of which the greater part of the letters appeared to him manifestly written for publication. Yet he selected several, of which he would have been glad to have been the author. Rousseau, on his side, could have wished to tear out many pages from Voltaire, and had they both done this for each other, posterity would probably have considered them as rendering it service.

Voltaire greatly admired M. de Buffon, but he could not approve of poetical descriptions in a body of Natural History, or allow that an account of the horse or the ass should be written in the style of *Telemachus*. It might be urged, in answer, that M. de Buffon, naturally eloquent, followed his own genius, without any great regard to the science on which he treated, and that we

easily

easily pardon a writer for lavishing ornaments on a subject which appears, in its own nature, dry and uninteresting.

Voltaire has been very severe on the French Opera, not because he had not succeeded in that kind of writing, for he was very sensible of the merit of a good opera. No one has said more in praise of Quinault, perhaps he has said too much, but our lyric tragedy appeared to him a species of poem necessarily disgusting by the continual repetition of common-place gallantry. Nothing is to be met with in them, said he, (and as the author of *Le Double Fauçage*, *The Double Widowhood*, had said before) but

Flames and darts and pangs and hearts,
Flowers and bowers, brooks and crooks, and
Groves and doves, and little loves.

It is to be remarked that Voltaire often repeated in his writings the bon mots of others. There is a pleasantry of his upon a prelate, equally learned and virtuous, whose name alone would put him in a rage. "At Puy, says he, they enquired whether Monseigneur had not printed something at Paris, and at Paris they asked,

asked, whether he had not published something at Puy." This thought is taken from the following epigram against the poet Roi:

While list'ning to Roi, tho' his rhimes are despis'd,
He makes fools imagine, they're ev'ry where priz'd:
In Paris they sell at Versailles, he declares,
In Versailles, oh! that all Paris buys them he swears.

In general, those who delight in either uttering or writing bon mots are greatly addicted to plagiarism. When Voltaire was received into the academy, Piron, not being able to make way through the crowd, said, "I find it is more difficult to get in here than to be admitted a member."

This had been before said, by the Abbé Servien, as long ago as the year 1712, and is to be found in some satirical pieces at the end of the Neological Dictionary of the Abbé des Fontaines.

To return to the plagiarisms of Voltaire from celebrated authors; we ought not to forget the Persian Letters of Montesquieu, which have supplied him with many pleasantries; and the Spirit of Laws, from which he has borrowed many thoughts.

The

The expression, in the *Ecoffaise*, I will not say, but I will swear, is originally Piron's.

This Epigram

A serpent Freron bit, in spite ;
 Know you what follow'd from the bite ?
 Not, Sir, the latter, but the first,
 Did, with increase of venom, burst.

is only a parody of another written long before.

Voltaire well knew he was accused of borrowing from others, and defended himself with some degree of plausibility.

“ My rivals, says he, incessantly accuse me
 “ with pillaging both the ancients and moderns.
 “ We both frequently treat on the same subject,
 “ and we both pillage to adorn it ; but from the
 “ success of their works, and of mine, it is manifest
 “ I am not the unpardonable thief.”

Voltaire has likewise been reproached with criticising the authors, from whom he borrowed, with undeserved severity, and thus setting fire to the house he had plundered. Shakespeare has been mentioned as one instance. But he had bestowed just praises on the English poet, and it must be confessed, that, in imitating him, he has corrected all his defects, and surpassed his beauties. “ A literary thief, says a certain wit, should
 always

always murder his man." This is precisely what Voltaire has done by Shakespeare, in his tragedy of *La Mort de César* : The Death of Cæsar*.

Several of the works of Voltaire have been translated into almost all the languages of Europe. They have even penetrated into China. A learned Chinese has translated several poetical pieces of the French Homer. They are greatly admired, it is said, by the reigning Emperor, Kien-Long, who has given Voltaire the title of *Poussal-fond*, or the Supernatural Mind.

But this Supernatural Mind has been accused of ignorance by his critics. This accusation is certainly unjust. Voltaire, indeed, had not the learning of Mabillon, or Du Cange; and may perhaps have made a few mistakes in chronology or history : but, in general, he was well informed of his subject. He had some knowledge of every

* This passage is translated with the contempt it deserves, and is an additional proof, if any proof were wanting, that though Frenchmen have a thousand shining qualities, a thousand virtues, their ridiculous and extreme vanity overclouds and often totally obscures them all, T.

Yet forgive me, God,

That I do brag thus—This your air of France

Hath blown that vice in me.

SHAKESPEARE'S, *HEN. V.*

science

science, and had studied several with great attention. The Abbé Trublet, who knew him well, has cited him as a proof, that talents may be improved by learning. " There is nothing, says he, which he does not know, and those literati who have been most familiar with him, corroborate this testimony, though many of the learned treat him as superficial in those sciences which they have made the particular objects of their study.

As to languages, he understood Latin, English, and Italian. He knew but little of Greek, nothing of Hebrew, and was but moderately acquainted with the Spanish. French, however, he understood perfectly, and was a master of all its niceties, as sufficiently appeared by his conversation and writings. He had likewise bestowed considerable attention on etymology, being well convinced, that this species of learning, when neither arbitrary nor chimerical, is highly necessary to an accurate knowledge and proper use of words.

As a specimen of the conversation of Voltaire, we shall add the following Dialogues :

A Conversation between M. DE VOLTAIRE and two Travellers from Avignon.

VISITORS.

We were unwilling to pass through Geneva without seeing the wonder of the age.

VOL-

VOLTAIRE.

You are very polite. I am only a sick old man. May I ask you, gentlemen, if you have travelled far?

VISITORS.

We are from Avignon.

VOLTAIRE.

You are leaving then the papal territories for an heretical country—and what will the inquisition say?

VISITORS.

Our inquisition is very mild, it hurts nobody.

VOLTAIRE.

It is pity but it would hurt some of your printers, who fill all Europe with rhapsodies and satires.

VISITORS.

These works are not known at Avignon; they are printed by stealth, and circulated in the same manner.

VOLTAIRE.

You have in your city a very amiable man of learning; I mean the Marquis of Caumont. I have also had some acquaintance with the Abbé de Sade. Is he not publishing the Memoirs of Petrarch?

V I S-

VISITORS.

Yes; the first volume has already appeared, in quarto, and will be followed by two others.

VOLTAIRE.

Three volumes, in quarto, on one man! It is too much.

VISITORS.

But he has inserted part of the poetry of Petrarch, which he has translated into French verse.

VOLTAIRE.

I would not advise him to translate it all. A repetition of the same ideas and the same sentiments would not greatly please our French readers. We are, besides, so rich in these kind of compositions, that we have no need of supplies from a foreign language. I doubt, much, whether Petrarch, though a very great man, in the age in which he lived, were equal to our Racine, or even Quinault. However, if he were as ingenious, he certainly was not so natural. I have formerly attempted to translate several of his pieces, but I soon perceived he had often more imagination than taste, and more wit than pathos. Whoever translates Petrarch ought to make a selection.

VISIT

VISITORS.

It is probable the Abbé de Sade will make such a selection.

VOLTAIRE.

You have many Jesuits in your country, have you not?

VISITORS.

There are some.

VOLTAIRE.

Those gentlemen ought not to take advantage of their asylum, to publish all manner of abuse against persons of merit, whom they ought to respect.

VISITORS.

Those of whom we have any knowledge are, for the most part, peaceable old men; we do not know that they have written against any one. Perhaps the presses of Avignon are blamed for what is in reality published at Liege or Brussels, &c.

B b

Another

Another Conversation * between M. DE
VOLTAIRE and a Workman of the
County of Neufchatel.

VOLTAIRE.

Is it true that you come from Neufchatel ?

WORKMAN.

Yes, Sir.

VOLTAIRE.

Are you from the town of Neufchatel itself ?

WORKMAN.

No, Sir. I come from the village of Butte,
in the valley of Travers.

VOLTAIRE.

Butte ! Is that far from Motiers ?

WORKMAN.

About a short league.

VOLTAIRE.

There is a certain person in your country who
has been guilty of a great number of absurdities.

* This conversation is taken from the letters of J. J. Rouf-
seau, to whom it was related by M. de Montmollin, who had
it from the workman himself.

WORK-

WORKMAN.

Whom do you mean, Sir?

VOLTAIRE.

One Jean Jacques Rousseau. Do you know him?

WORKMAN.

Yes, Sir. I saw him once, at Butte, in the coach of M. de Montmollin, who was taking an airing with him.

VOLTAIRE.

What! Does that fellow ride in a coach? He is become very proud, sure.

WORKMAN.

He walks too sometimes, and climbs up our mountains like a cat.

VOLTAIRE.

He will climb up a ladder one day or other. He was very near being hanged at Paris, and will, yet, if ever he returns thither.

WORKMAN.

Hanged! Sir. He has all the appearance of an honest man. Good God! What has he done?

VOLTAIRE.

He has written abominable books. He is a very wicked wretch; an atheist.

Bb 2

WORK-

WORKMAN.

You surprize me ! Why, he goes every Sunday to church.

VOLTAIRE.

What a hypocrite ! Well, and what do they say of him in your country ? Does any body desire to see him ?

WORKMAN.

Every body, Sir. Every body loves him. His company is sought after every where. He is particularly a favorite with my Lord *.

VOLTAIRE.

His Lordship does not know him ; nor do you. Only wait two or three months, and you will see what he is. The people of Montmorenci, where he lives, made bonfires when they found he had escaped the gallows. He is a man without faith, honor, or religion. (**)

* Lord Keith, Governor of Neufchatel.

(**) Voltaire certainly spoke of J. J. Rousseau with great asperity : he was one of those persons the mention of whose very name was sufficient to put him out of humor. Yet he often pretended to wish a reconciliation with him ; but Rousseau did not believe him sincere. " He has had a long conversation," says he, with Monsieur * * *, he has played his part admirably : he is no stranger to the requisites necessary for a " great actor. *Dolus instructus et arte Pelasgus.*" Voltaire indeed

WORKMAN.

Without religion, Sir ! It has been said, you have not much of that yourself.

VOLTAIRE.

No ! Gracious God ! Who can say such a thing ?

WORKMAN.

All the world, Sir.

VOLTAIRE.

O what horrible slander ! Have I not studied among the Jesuits, and discoursed concerning God, better than the whole body of divines ?

WORKMAN.

But it is said, Sir, you have written very wicked books.

VOLTAIRE.

It is false. Let them produce a single book which bears my name, as those of that beggar bear his, &c. &c.

indeed was ashamed of the name of persecutor, given him by Rousseau and his partisans, and, perhaps, on that account, really desired a reconciliation ; but Jean Jacques was too suspicious, and could not easily appear friendly with those from whom his heart was estranged. He could not, he said, promise an esteem which did not depend on himself. Indeed, what purpose could any reconciliation answer, when the contending parties could neither love nor respect each other ?

B b 3

A N

A N
A B S T R A C T,
HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL,
O F T H E
T H E A T R I C A L W O R K S
O F
M. D E V O L T A I R E.

I. **O**EDIPE, the first attempt of M. de Voltaire, was likewise his master-piece, at least for the versification. This piece, acted in 1718, has undergone frequent criticisms, which in general have been well-founded. We shall quote what M. de Voltaire has himself said.

“ The grand defect is the subject. The tragedy of Oedipus ought regularly to end with the first act. It is not natural to suppose Oedipus ignorant of the circumstances attending his predecessor’s death. Sophocles took no pains to correct this fault ; and Corneille, by endeavouring to avoid it, has done still worse ; nor have I succeeded better than these great men.

B b 4

“ My

“ My piece has also a more considerable defect,
 “ which does not result from the subject, and for
 “ which I am alone responsible ; I mean the cha-
 “ racter of Philoctetes. He seems to have come
 “ to Thebes merely to be accused, though there
 “ is, perhaps, but little reason for any accu-
 “ sation. He arrives in the first act, and goes
 “ back in the third. He is only to be found in
 “ the three first acts, and is not so much as men-
 “ tioned in the last. He contributes but little to
 “ the plot, and the catastrophe is effected abso-
 “ lutely without his aid. Thus the piece ap-
 “ pears composed of two tragedies, one of which
 “ has for its subject Philoctetes, and the other
 “ Oedipus.

“ I have been solicitous to give Philoctetes
 “ the character of a hero ; but am fearful what I
 “ intended for greatness of soul may appear ridi-
 “ culous boasting. Happily, I have read, in
 “ Madam Dacier, that it is allowable for a man
 “ to speak well of himself, when he is calum-
 “ niated ; now this is precisely the case of Phi-
 “ loctetes. He is reduced, by slanderous accu-
 “ sations, to the necessity of commending him-
 “ self. In any other situation I should have given
 “ him more politeness than pride, and were he
 “ described in like circumstances with Sertorius
 “ and Pompey, I should have taken the conver-
 “ sation

“ fation of those two great men as my model :
 “ however I might have despaired to attain its
 “ excellence,

“ With respect to the amour between Jocasta
 “ and Philoctetes, I may boldly affirm it is a de-
 “ fect absolutely necessary. The subject, in itself,
 “ furnished nothing sufficient to fill the three first
 “ acts. Those who are acquainted with theatrical
 “ compositions, and are as well aware of their
 “ difficulty as sensible of such errors, will be per-
 “ fectly of my opinion. The principal cha-
 “ racters must always be agitated by some pas-
 “ sions, and how insipid had been the part of Jo-
 “ casta had she not at least preserved the remem-
 “ brance of a legitimate love, and had she not
 “ been distressed with fears for the life of a man
 “ who had formerly been the object of her
 “ affections !

“ I confess I have been shewn several verses,
 “ in my piece, which are to be found in other
 “ dramatic productions. I say, I have been
 “ shewn ; for whether, having my memory filled
 “ with the verses of other writers, I imagined
 “ what occurred to be the fruit of my own in-
 “ vention, or whether the same thoughts and
 “ turns of expression may sometimes present them-
 “ selves to different persons, it is certain I have
 “ been

“ been a plagiarist without my knowledge, and
 “ that except those beautiful lines of Corneille,

Ce monstre à voix humaine, &c.

“ And that other passage,

Et le fort qui l'accable, &c.

“ I have not designedly borrowed from any one.
 “ In Corneille's *Horace* is the following verse,

Est ce vous Curiace? en croirai je mes yeux.

“ In my piece there is,

Est ce vous Philoctete? en croirai je mes yeux.

“ I hope every one will do me the honor to
 “ believe me capable of writing a line equally
 “ good; however I have altered it, and cannot
 “ but wish all my errors had been as easy to
 “ correct.”

La Motte, by his office, was censor of this piece,
 and he has expressed himself thus, “ The public,
 “ during its representation, believed a worthy
 “ successor of Corneille and Racine had arisen;
 “ nor will their hopes be disappointed by its ap-
 “ pearance in print.”

II. OEDIPUS was performed more than forty
 times, in opposition to a swarm of critics; but

ARTE-

ARTEMIRE, a tragedy acted in 1720, had no success. It was never printed; we must therefore pass over in silence both its beauties and defects. It is said to have contained many excellent verses; but the conduct of the piece was, undoubtedly, not equal to the verification.

III. HERODE ET MARIAMNE, acted in 1723, had, originally, no more success than Artemire. The first-representation was not even permitted to be finished, through a whimsical criticism of the pit, who were offended at the Queen's drinking on the stage*. The following year the Queen did not drink, and the piece was acted forty times. "The French people (said the Abbé de la Porte) delight in extremes; for, to confess the truth, this tragedy neither deserved its former disgrace, nor its subsequent success."

The choice of the subject was greatly blamed. The petit-maitres alledged it was only an old, brutal, and amorous husband, whose wife refused to comply with conjugal duty; and they added,

* Its failure has been also attributed to a bon mot. A comedy, called *Le Deuil* (The Mourning) was acted as an after-piece. A wit cried out, "It was this mourning for the new piece;" and even this contributed not a little to dispose the audience to receive the tragedy unfavorably.

a family

a family quarrel was not a proper theme for a tragedy. But this quarrel has been ennobled by the brilliant pencil of the author; and, perhaps, this brilliance is even sometimes too excessive. We do not find in *Mariamne* the sweet and tender style of *Zaire*, and it contains too many epic verses. It is no wonder the subject should excite the genius of M. de Voltaire to undertake its embellishment. A King who has been universally honored with the title of the Great, passionately fond of the most beautiful woman in the world; the frantic passion of a monarch so famous for his virtues and his crimes, his past cruelties and present remorse; that continual and rapid transition from love to hatred, and hatred to love; the ambition of his sister; the intrigues of his ministers; the cruel situation of a Princess, whose virtue and beauty are still celebrated through the world, who had seen her father and brother put to death by her husband, and who, still more to heighten her calamities, saw herself passionately loved by the murderer of her nearest relations! What a field is here for such an imagination as M. de Voltaire's! But it must be acknowledged also, that this vast field affords several tender situations, which rather require the pencil of Paul Veronese than that of Michael Angelo.

IV.

IV. *L'INDISCRET*, a comedy, acted in 1725, was the first dramatic work, of the comic kind, produced by M. de Voltaire. This piece is written with great propriety and art, and in the true style of good comedy. It contains character, ludicrous situation, and sprightly dialogue. It is no less correct than elegant, though the language may, perhaps, not be esteemed sufficiently flowing.

V. M. de Voltaire remained five years after the appearance of this piece, without producing any thing for the theatre. The Study of the English Language, his Travels in England, his History of Charles XII. and his Miscellanies engaged his whole attention, during that interval. At length his *BRUTUS* came forth; this tragedy was performed, for the first time, in 1730. It had no success in France; but was better received by foreigners, than any other of his pieces.

Its defects, it must be confessed, are considerable; but it must also be allowed, it is, in many respects, a work worthy of its author, and the admiration of posterity. Many dramatic pieces have had great success in the representation, tho' it is impossible to read them with patience; but of this the reverse is true. Though it pleased but little on the stage, it was much more admired in the closet; "A proof (says the Abbé des Fontaines)

taines) that it possesses merit and beauties; which charm more forcibly the more they are examined."

The pencil of Corneille is apparent in many places. The versification is worthy the genius of its author; and, except in a few instances, where it seems to have been less attended to, the more it is read the more it pleases. What thoughts! what images! what sentiments! what harmony! The part of Tullia has been thought uninteresting, and with reason; but this is less the fault of the author than the audience. We are accustomed to consider the passion of love as the soul of tragedy; and continually expect the ideas and intrigues of romance. Every female character, if not conformable to this prejudice, appears to us insipid.

VI. *ERIPHILE*, a tragedy, acted two years after *Brutus*, but never printed till 1779, was entirely unsuccessful, and deserved its disgrace. The plot was intitled to no praise; its brilliant and pompous language was therefore disregarded. Nothing was noticed but the want of connexion in its parts, and propriety in its characters. The marvellous incident of the ghost disgusted the audience, who were not to be appeased by a few detached beauties.

VII,

VII. M. de Voltaire had already emulated Corneille, and in 1732, he became the successful rival of Racine, by producing his *ZAÏRE*. This was the first dramatic piece in which he gave full liberty to the sensibility of his heart. He had formed the idea of opposing to each other, in the same work, on one side, honor, high birth, the love of our country, and religion; and, on the other, a passion the most tender and unfortunate; to contrast the manners of the Mahometans and those of the Christians; the court of a Sultan and that of a King of France, and to make the French nation enter, for the first time, into the tragic scene. This project was truly great, and the author executed it in eighteen days. But a work so hastily conceived, and rapidly executed, could not be without faults; they were soon remarked by the critics.

With many a sneer they oft repeated,
That I, from fancy over heated,
All rule and reason far astray,
Had forg'd a novel, not a play;
Had maim'd the tale, nor shewn, at last,
How these strange incidents had past.

EPI. TO *ZAÏRE*.

It was remarked that Orosmanes was rather a French courtier than a Turkish Sultan: that it
was

was not probable a Turk should so govern his passion for a slave till after the marriage ceremony: that Zaïre was not sufficiently a Christian: that she reasoned very indifferently on the subject of religion: that she was undetermined even in death: and that it could not be known whether she died in the belief of Christianity, or in a total indifference for every religion: that the letter, which proved her destruction, was a frivolous invention, &c. Yet though it was criticised without remission, the applause it received was unbounded. What a beautiful scene is that between Lufignan and his children! Racine himself has written no tragedy more affecting: no piece ever drew more tears from the audience; and, though the language may sometimes appear less carefully studied, it far more frequently exhibits that elegant delicacy which is the indisputable mark of true genius.

The author labored incessantly to correct it during its first run, but such alterations are not very agreeable to the actors. The celebrated Dufresne, weary of receiving every day new corrections, ordered that no message from M. de Voltaire should be admitted. The poet, however, contrived to transmit him his alterations by a very singular stratagem. He knew that Dufresne intended to give a grand dinner to his friends, and caused a partridge pie to be made, which he
sent

sent to the actor, strictly charging the person who carried it, not to say from whom it came. The pie was presently opened; but how great was the surprize of the guests to find in it twelve partridges, each holding in its beak several little notes, containing the additions, retrenchments and alterations he had made in the part of Dufresne. It was easy to know from whom the present came, and every one warmly praised this ingenious and delicate method of rendering the corrections of an author acceptable to the actor.

VIII. ALZIRE, the younger sister of Zaïre, appeared in 1736, and received equal applause. It exhibits the sublimity and noble independence of a soul uncorrupted by art; still more tender even than Zaïre, it affects every heart that possesses the least sensibility.

The success of this piece could not silence the critics. It is not without defects, though its beauties ought to prevent their being mentioned. This tragedy occasioned the following excellent verses by Gresset.

Beauty, most faultless, still, hath faults some few;
 Thrice have I seen Alzire, thrice charm'd anew,
 Have heard her casual blemishes decried;
 But tears can better, sure, than rules decide:
 And, tho' she may receive a frown from art,
 She gains th' unbounded plaudits of the heart.

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Good

Good taste, devoid of rule, walks self-erect ;
 Where most is feeling, there is least defect.
 Nor is it chance that thus the soul can heat :
 When Nature's fountains flow, there's no deceit.
 Then snarl who will, I feel these pure delights,
 When charming Gauffin acts what Voltaire writes.

Some envious persons having circulated a report that *Alzire* was not the work of M. de Voltaire, "I could wish it were not with all my heart," said an officer present. Being asked his reason, "Because, added he, we should then have gained another poet." Indeed the genius of the truly great poet is very apparent in *Alzire*, in the sublimity and harmony of its versification, in its nervous and tender sentiments, in the probability and interest given to a subject so opposite to our manners, and the propriety with which characters so singular and extraordinary are supported.

IX. L'ENFANT PRODIGE. This comedy, acted the same year as *Alzire*, and with nearly the same success, proves M. de Voltaire to be equally capable of brandishing the terrific dagger, or waving the sportive mask. Though it contains many exceptionable passages, it well deserved all the applause it received. The singular style of this work, resembling no other of the kind, and the

the peculiar measure of its verse*, which was new to the French theatre, contributed to attract large audiences. It is calculated to draw tears no less than to excite laughter, though it does not too much abound in what has been called *Le Comique Larmoyant*, nor has it absolutely forsaken the character of good comedy.

This comedy was not at first acknowledged by M. de Voltaire. "*L'Enfant Prodigue*, says he, in a letter about that time, is an orphan of which I do not avow myself the father." Opinions were divided with regard to the author. "As for me," said the Abbé des Fontaines, I was not in doubt a moment; but, without pretending to penetrate the mystery, I shall only say, that a great poet may, sometimes, write beneath himself, and produce things mean and trivial; that he may offer to the stage insipidities, which he approved in his closet, and flat witticisms, which can only be pleasing to his own heated imagination. But in the midst of all these defects, which are principally noticed by little critics, extraordinary genius shines forth. The singular abilities of the concealed author are easily discovered, by the ease of his style, his agreeable dialogue, the delicacy of his turns,

* It is written in verse of ten syllables.

“ and the characteristic elegance of a great number of lines, which are manifestly by the hand of a master. There are, in the fourth and fifth acts, several affecting and well finished scenes, which clearly prove the pathetic to be particularly suited to the genius of the writer.”

X. In theatrical productions, the most brilliant success is sometimes only the forerunner of ill fortune. This was verified by M. de Voltaire, when his *ZULIME* was acted, in 1740. The three first acts were much applauded; but the two last were so ill received that it was not thought advisable to act it a second time. The author himself confessed it was inferior to his other tragedies. “ It was, he said, a summer shower.” It was revived in 1762, and with some success, notwithstanding the faults with which it abounds.

“ The subject of the tragedy, says M. Rousseau de Toulouse, is interesting, but the incidents are not sufficiently explained, connected, or probable. The arrival of Benassar is too sudden; his entry into the city, Arzenia, too easily effected; the combats are too quick and too confused; the victory of *Alide*, who, by his courage, astonishes the soldiers, and gains *Ramire*, borders too much on the marvellous. It were to be wished there had been more probability in the sudden change
of

of *Zulime*, who, after having distinctly perceived the understanding between the two lovers, unaccountably shuts her eyes to the light, and blindly confides in those who have betrayed her. Her forsaking the religion of her fathers seems without sufficient motive. The subject, in fact, admits of no denouement, and the two which have been tried are neither of them satisfactory."

Besides, as the author himself has remarked, the defects of the character of Ramire have influenced the whole piece. A hero, who has no other part but that of a lover, will never greatly interest the audience. He is no longer a character proper for tragedy.

We must therefore confess the subject defective : yet this ill-fabricated canvass Voltaire has frequently embellished with the most brilliant colouring. What fire, what pathos in the part of *Zulime* ! How affecting is *Alide* ! How generous *Ramire* ! What tenderness, truth, and elevation in the character of *Benassar* ! The simplicity of the piece is another subject for panegyric. It contains neither episode nor foreign incident ; every thing arises naturally from the characters introduced in the first act.

XI. *LA MORT DE CÉSAR*, a tragedy, in three acts, performed in 1742, is very different from

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the preceding. Zulima contains nothing but love: in the Death of Cæsar there is neither female nor tender passion. All the characters converse with a familiar equality. Such is the behaviour of Brutus to Cæsar, though he styles him his father, and though he has resolved to assassinate him. The sentiments of Brutus are more extravagant than heroic. This piece, in its plan, dialogue, conduct, style and sentiments, is entirely in the taste of the English stage. It may inspire a noble zeal for liberty and our country, in a generous and well cultivated mind; but, in another point of view, it may be prejudicial, by exhibiting an example of ferocious and unnatural courage.

Almost every line of this work bears the marks of the great genius; many are extremely beautiful, and many of the thoughts forcible, manly and new. The scene of the conspirators is one of the most nervous to be found on the stage. Some passages are written with an eloquence truly sublime; but to taste their beauties requires a Roman audience, and not an assembly of the effeminate *petit maitres* of Paris,

XII. LE FANATISME, or Mahomet the Prophet. In this piece, brought on the stage in 1742, M. de Voltaire appeared the successful rival of Crebillon, as in his Brutus he had vied with Corneille,

neille, and in his *Zaïre* with Racine. Mahomet is allowed, by the best judges, to be an admirable composition, both for eloquence and poetry. The madness of fanaticism, and the ungovernable transports of ambition and revenge were, perhaps, never imagined with greater force. But this piece requires actors, and an audience, worthy its excellence.

If, in the fourth act, we could find performers capable of all the emotions and agitation of violent passion; a *Seide*, who should at once be actuated by enthusiasm and tenderness, brutal thro' fanaticism, but naturally humane and capable at once to rage and weep; a *Palmire*, animated, tender, terrified and trembling at the crime she is about to commit, and seized with horror, repentance and despair at the instant that crime is perpetrated; a father, whose feeling voice and manner might prove him truly a father, who should recognize his two children in his murderers, and embrace them, mingling his tears with theirs, and with his own blood, who might raise himself to clasp them in his arms and sink again supported by them; could we find actors to express such situations and emotions, with suitable energy, these scenes would be superior to any thing we have ever seen.

XIII. Though the success of Mahomet was somewhat equivocal, that of MEROPE, acted in 1743, was exceedingly brilliant. This piece is superior to the *Andromaque* of Racine. We can never sufficiently admire the infinite art with which M. de Voltaire has so much interested us, by a piece in which no mutual passion is displayed, and where all the sentiments and situations turn on the tender affection of a mother for her child; whereas, in the *Andromaque*, the love of Orestes for Hermione, which is perhaps too much in the nature of an episode, produces almost all the interest of the piece.

We can never too often remind our young poets, who are too apt to be infatuated with romantic incidents, that Merope has only been so much applauded, because it is Nature herself, and that, if this tragedy had a fifth act, it would be the first of dramatic models. What a picture of maternal tenderness! What mother was ever actuated by feelings more forcible! How is she alarmed for the life of *Egisfe*! How transported with joy when she sees him again! How fearful of losing him! and how anxious to re-establish him on the throne of the Heraclidæ, his ancestors.

The part of Merope was the triumph of Mademoiselle du Mesnil. What acclamations of tenderness and admiration did she not extort, when,
with

with distraction in her eyes and suffocation in her voice, she lifted her trembling hand to sacrifice her own son; when Narbas prevented the blow, and, dropping her poniard, she fainted in the arms of her attendants; when she recovered from her trance, and, rushing towards *Polifonte*, crossed the stage, in an instant, and, weeping, pale, and frantic, stretched forth her arms, crying out, "Barbarian, he is my son!"

This tragedy pleased far more on the stage than in the perusal. On which account M. de Fontenelle said, with equal ingenuity and delicacy, "The representations of *Merope* have done great honor to M. de Voltaire, and the printed copies to Mademoiselle du Mefnil." The style was censured as not sufficiently polished. "This piece, said the Abbé des Fontaines, certainly contains many harmonious lines, but many do not rise above, and many are even below, mediocrity. M. de Voltaire in all his works resembles Tintoret, the famous painter of the Venetian school, of whom the Italians said, That, he had three pencils, one of gold, one of silver, and the other of iron. The *Henriade* is the work of all these three. *Oedipus* is the only piece in which the golden one has been employed alone. M. de Voltaire, when he wrote that, could write no verses but what were

"good ;

“ good, yet, in whatever he produces, the man
 “ of genius and the great writer are very appa-
 “ rent; because he possesses the art of being elo-
 “ quent in verse: an art extremely difficult and
 “ equally rare.”

M. de Voltaire has also been censured for hav-
 ing formed his *Merope* on the tragedy of Maffei;
 but this reproach is unjust, because the imitation
 of the French author may be very reasonably con-
 sidered, as invention. It cannot be denied but the
 Italian tragedy required great correction, to be
 rendered even supportable; and it is much to the
 credit of the understanding of the French imitator,
 that, disdaining to copy the first act, which in
 the Italian is perfectly ridiculous, he has only
 followed the other four, in which he has made
 great alterations. If M. de Voltaire cannot claim
 the glory of invention in this piece, neither does
 it belong to M. Maffei, since, prior to his tra-
 gedy, there existed two or three *Telephontes* and
 one *Amasis*. To be able to bring the works of
 others to perfection is always justly deserving
 praise, and especially when we are ourselves ca-
 pable of original invention.

XIV. LA PRINCESSE DE NAVARRE, a ballet
 comedy, was represented at Versailles, in 1745.
 The King being desirous to give an entertainment
 to

to the Dauphiness, which should not merely be addressed to the eye, M. de Voltaire was appointed to compose a drama for the occasion, and produced a species of composition in which the music makes a principal part. The heroic style is intermingled with pleasantry, and the whole is a mixture of opera, comedy, and tragedy. Such is the *Princesse de Navarre*. This whimsical and romantic piece was severely criticised, with respect to the matter and the form. We do not mean to write its apology, but, as it abounds with action, it was, perhaps, on that account, highly proper for the purpose for which it was intended. *Marechal Richelieu*, who equally cultivated and patronized the fine arts, caused the *Princesse de Navarre* to be again performed at *Bordeaux*, about twenty years ago, where it was then received very favorably.

XV. *SEMIRAMIS* was composed, as well as the *Princesse de Navarre*, for the entertainment of the Infanta of Spain, Dauphiness of France, but it was not acted till 1748. This piece required great magnificence of dress, and superb scenery; and the King was willing to be at the expence, out of respect to the Princess, by whom it had been required. M. de Cr  billon had before written a tragedy with the same title, but it was unsuccessful.

ful. *M. de Voltaire's* was still more so. The contrivance is nearly alike in both. They contain the same characters, except the ghost of Ninus, which has been greatly ridiculed; but, if it really contributes to the interest of the piece, the ridicule is misplaced. The part of Semiramis, tho' not very interesting, is sublime; but the three first acts, do not speak sufficiently to the heart; and, though the fourth has more feeling, the fifth is at once destitute of warmth and probability. We too soon perceive how the whole must conclude. At the beginning of the second scene the whole plot is brought up in a box, in which is childishly displayed the seal, sword, royal diadem, and a letter of Ninus. The intrigue lies all in that box, which is no sooner opened than we read, in the letter, that Arsaces is Ninias, and, on the hilt of the sword, that he is to employ it to revenge the death of his father.

Notwithstanding these defects, and others, which an intelligent reader cannot fail to discern, this tragedy contains many beauties. The fourth act appears to deserve great praise. The discovery of the mother and the son is conducted with all that strength, fire, and superiority of pathos, for which *M. de Voltaire* is so distinguished. The three first acts are cold, indeed; but the objects they exhibit are grand, and their coloring magnificent.

nificent. The piece is written throughout with much elevation, the versification is brilliant, rarely negligent, and full of that harmony, that richness of expression, and true poetical charm, which enchants the understanding and the ear.

This tragedy, however, was by no means well received, at the first representation. The author, meeting Piron behind the scenes, asked him, "What he thought of it?" "I think, replied Piron, you would have been very glad if I had written it." Piron did not content himself with this bon mot; he wrote a burlesque song, in which he comprized a variety of the objectionable particulars in the piece.

New blasphemies, fanatic fears,
Kings, Commons, and Peers;
Asses ears.

Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!

What shall you not see in this new raree-show?

A casket! a dream! a toledo most glum!
A letter! a foolish prediction!
A coronet! a watchbox! a palace! a tomb!
A miracle! tho' but in fiction.
New blasphemies, &c.

A legion of devils! with antics and freaks!

Over head thunder rumbling,

Under foot ghosts a grumbling,

With flashes of light'ning, and phantoms, and shrieks,

Of

Of poison ! ah ! treason ! oh ! murder ! where ? here !
 Help ! incest ! guards ! daggers ! death ! mercy ! oh dear !
 New blasphemies, &c.

The insects of the pit followed the example of M. Piron. Every different species of criticism, both in verse and prose, was levelled against Semiramis. Parodies, songs, epigrams, observations, judgments, reflections, remarks, letters, parallels, were all employed to entomb her and Ninus together. Some pretended this would also prove the grave of Voltaire, but he afterwards gave sufficient proofs he was still alive.

XVI. ORESTE, acted in 1750, was almost as much criticised as Semiramis, and, though it deserved it more, M. de Voltaire, when he published his piece, indulged his resentment in some reflexions on the subject. " Since the observations
 " of the academy on the *Cid*, said he, not a single dramatic production has appeared which
 " has not been criticised, nor a single one
 " which has been criticised with judgment." This will not be believed by every one, but Voltaire may be excused for speaking thus after the equivocal success of his Oreste. The author attributed this reverse of fortune to a powerful party, which had been formed against him, though no great poet was ever known to have had a greater number

ber of zealous partisans. He afterwards threw the blame on Sophocles, who had served him for a model : he said, to one of his friends, when he gave him a copy, " I make you no great present, it is the work of Sophocles." " M. de Voltaire might have added, says M. Daquin, for the honor of the Grecian poet and of truth, I present you with Sophocles disguised and enfeebled."

The pleasure of surprize is wanting; the two last acts are languid, tumid in diction and feeble in action, conduct and probability. To add to these defects, that poetic fire, which had rendered so many little errors in Semiramis pardonable, was no longer to be found; and, instead of marks of genius, it abounded with verbose declamation and redundancies. Yet there are several beautiful scenes in this piece, which M. de Voltaire has since purified from the faults with which it was disfigured. The interrogatories put to Orestes, who comes to announce his own death to Clytemnestra and the tyrant, and especially that moment when the distraction of Orestes, speaking to his mother, brings him to the point of betraying himself, keep the audience in the greatest agitation. The supposition of the ashes of the son of Egistus, in the funeral urn, instead of those of Orestes, which it was said to contain, is also a very happy idea.

XVII.

XVII. *ROME SAUVÉE*, a tragedy, acted in 1752, almost entirely eclipsed the *Catiline* of M. de Crebillon, at least for the elegance of its style. The part of Cicero was universally applauded, that of Catiline is entirely sacrificed to it; but very beautiful lines are to be found in both. M. de Voltaire has highly embellished the character of Cicero: he has rendered his vanity more noble, his eloquence more pure, and attributed to him a generosity and firmness of soul of which he was not possessed.

“ The glow of particular passages is so great,
 “ says M. Clement in his Letters, that I entirely
 “ forget in what manner they are connected, and
 “ indeed I know not whether a piece more re-
 “ gularly and artificially conducted, with respect
 “ to its interest, could have given me so much
 “ pleasure. For, after all, what great interest can
 “ we take in the safety of Rome? Is it because
 “ it was a republic? This idea is vague in-
 “ deed! The heart knows only individuals. Oh!
 “ but our country. Our country is a fine word,
 “ and is certainly not without some meaning.

“ But, unfortunately, the minds of nine-tenths
 “ of an audience are more conformable to Epi-
 “ curean principles. Among all the theatrical
 “ pieces, the plots of which are founded on a
 “ conspiracy, there is, perhaps, not one in which

“ we

“ we are affected by the danger of the state, but
 “ by some particular characters, which we
 “ are artfully induced to consider as lovely or
 “ odious.”

While the enchanting poetry of M. de Voltaire has been admired, the plan of his piece has been censured. This has happened to almost all his tragedies. But these slight defects of intrigue are overlooked by the audience, especially when they are recompensed by great and shining passages; and such are undoubtedly to be found in *Rome Sauvée*. The second act is very fine, and the conspiracy is conducted in it with great strength and propriety; but the third does not support the dignity of the second. The character of Catiline sinks insensibly, and is poor and barren, when opposed to Cicero, who is the hero of the piece. It were to be wished, likewise, there were a little more of that gloomy horror, of which some slight traces are to be found in his *Mahomet*. But to inspire this passion was not the principal excellence of our great poet; and he was either unable or unwilling to force his genius.

XVIII. *LE DUC DE FOIX*, which was represented in 1753, was not a new piece. It had appeared before, in 1734, under the title of *Adelaide du Guesclin*. Men of taste read this performance

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with

with pleasure, not as a good tragedy, but as an instructive picture of the extravagance of the passions, and that torrent by which even the most virtuous are sometimes carried away. The first act is a little cold, and does not sufficiently abound with dramatic incident; either through the fault of the subject, or the inadvertence of the author, who might easily have remedied this defect, by retouching the opening scene, and altering that in which the extraction and family of Amelia is mentioned. The second act is so abundant in beauties that it has but one fault, which is, that it is too short. The interest of the piece is here extremely heightened, and rendered perfect in the third, by the taking and discovery of *Vamir*. The situation, of the suffering characters, is so well managed, in the fourth act, that this alone might ensure success. The fifth is full of action and energy, and it would not have cost M. de Voltaire any great efforts to render this tragedy equal to his latter productions.

The versification is excellent, the situations interesting, and the interview, of the two rival brothers with Amelia, is a truly beautiful scene.

In 1765, the original piece, *Adelaide du Guesclin*, was performed. Its fate was very different from what it had first experienced.

“ It

“ It was hissed, (that is, in 1734) says M. de
 “ Voltaire, in the first act, and the hissing en-
 “ creased in the second, when the Duke de Ne-
 “ mours entered, with his arm in a sling. It was
 “ still worse treated, when, in the fifth, the signal
 “ appointed by the Duke de Vendome was heard,
 “ and when the same Duke said, at the conclu-
 “ sion, Art thou content Coucy? Several witty
 “ persons immediately echoed *Coussi, Coussi* *.

“ You will easily imagine I was not obstinate
 “ after such a reception. I had the same tragedy
 “ acted some years afterwards, under the title of
 “ the Duc de Foix, but I rendered it much more
 “ feeble, out of respect to the ridicule with which
 “ it had been loaded. This piece, become now
 “ much worse, succeeded; and I entirely forgot
 “ the original, which was so much its superior.

“ A copy, however, of *Adelaide du Guesclin*
 “ remained in the hands of the actors, and they
 “ revived the play, without mentioning their in-
 “ tentions to me. They performed it as it had
 “ been presented them, in 1734, without altering
 “ a single word, and it was received with the ut-
 “ most applause. The very passages which had
 “ been most hissed, were those that were distin-
 “ guished by the loudest plaudits.”

* *Coussi* or *Couci*, signifies very *la la*, or very indifferent.

XIX. L'ORPHELIN DE LA CHINE, acted, for the first time, in the summer of 1755, gave infinite pleasure to every heart possessed of sensibility, or the love of virtue. The character of *Idmé* met with great applause. It is extremely interesting, and was played in a very superior style, by Mademoiselle Clairon. The first act has great merit, nor is the second at all inferior. It would have made a fine fourth act: perhaps the action is too much advanced in it, which makes the succeeding acts appear deficient. The denouement is the more excellent as the tragedy concludes without any effusion of blood.

The performers spared no expence to represent this piece with every advantage in their power. The Costume of China was observed as much as possible. Mademoiselle Clairon and Mademoiselle Hus laid by their hoops, an alteration entirely approved by the best judges.

XX. TANCREDE, acted in 1760, was written; and the parts studied, in two months. This piece was well contrived to display stage decoration; but this advantage, according to the opinion of the author, ought to have been supported by greater animation in the style, less declamation; and versification more polished. M. de Voltaire has not rhimed in couplets, but at intervals, as in the

the English ode. This kind of poetry prevents uniformity of rhyme, but the French thought it approached too near to prose. Were rhimes artfully varied, they might greatly contribute to the harmony of the verse, but this the author appears to have somewhat neglected.

M. de Voltaire has also been censured for employing several rhimes proscribed by the laws of French poetry; but, in our opinion, he has given several very good reasons to justify the liberty he has taken, in his *Tancrede* and his other tragedies. The following is the apology, contained in the letters on Oedipe, printed in 1719 :

“ It now remains for me to say something in
 “ defence of the rhimes I have hazarded in my
 “ tragedy. I have made *frein* rhyme with *rien*,
 “ *heros* with *tombeaux*, *contagion* with *poison*, &c.
 “ I do not defend these rhimes because I have
 “ used them, but I have admitted them because
 “ I believed them good. I cannot, with patience,
 “ see every poetical beauty sacrificed to the rich-
 “ nefs of the rhyme and more care taken to
 “ please the ear than to affect the heart, and in-
 “ form the understanding. This tyranny has been
 “ carried so far as to require rhimes for the eye
 “ still more than the ear. *Je ferois* and *J’aimerois*
 “ do not differ in pronounciation from *traits* and
 “ *attraits*; yet it is pretended these words do not

“ rhyme, because custom requires they should be
 “ written with different letters. *M. Racine* had
 “ written, in his *Andromaque*,

*M'en croirez-vous ? Lassé de ses trompeurs attraits,
 Au lieu de l'enlever, Seigneur, je la fuirais.*

“ However, as he could not vanquish his scrup-
 “ les, he struck out the word *fuirais*, which ap-
 “ pears to me, if the ear only be consulted, a
 “ much better rhyme to *attraits* than *jamaïs*, which
 “ he substituted in its stead.

“ The caprice of custom, or rather of those
 “ who have established it, permits the word *ab-*
 “ *horre*, which has two r's, to rhyme with *encore*,
 “ which has but one. By the same rule, *tonnerre*
 “ and *terre* ought to rhyme with *pere* and *mere*;
 “ yet this is not allowed, and nevertheless no one
 “ murmurs at these unreasonable restrictions.

“ I cannot but believe it would be much for
 “ the advantage of French poetry to shake off
 “ the yoke of this absurd and tyrannical custom.
 “ To permit authors the use of new rhymes
 “ would be to furnish them with new thoughts;
 “ for the slavish observance of rhyme frequently
 “ permits but a single word in the language to
 “ conclude the couplet. We can scarcely ever
 “ say what we intended to say, nor make use of
 “ the proper word; we are obliged to seek a
 “ thought

“ thought which may suit the rhyme, since we
 “ have no rhyme which can suit the thought.
 “ To this servile accuracy we are to impute the
 “ improprieties which so frequently offend us in
 “ the writings of our best poets. Authors are
 “ still more sensible than their readers of the
 “ cruelty of such a constraint, yet they dare not
 “ attempt to deliver themselves from their
 “ bondage.”

XXI. OLYMPIE. This tragedy was first acted
 at the theatre of the Elector Palatine. It appeared
 a new species of composition, and several bold
 theatrical situations rendered the conduct of the
 piece highly interesting, and most feelingly in-
 spired pity and terror. Every thing contributed to
 the horror of the denouement and catastrophe. Of
 all the death-blows ever dealt, on the tragic scene,
 none had appeared more affecting than that of
 Olympie. The decorations also were magnificent.
 The funeral pile, artfully disposed, excited hor-
 ror; the flames were real; the altar, on which
 Olympie was seen, gave a full view of this spec-
 tacle; the priests and priestesses, arranged in a
 semicircle at a distance from her, left the Princess
 at full liberty to precipitate herself into the fire.

This tragedy produced the same effect at Paris
 when it was acted there, in 1764. The learned

favorably received a piece which revived in their memories the most august and pleasing ceremonies of antiquity. It was reserved to M. de Voltaire, alone, to introduce, on the French stage, the rites of the ancient mysteries of paganism, with priests and priestesses in their ancient habits, and all the apparatus of a funeral pile, exhibited in the denouement of the piece. The illustrious author was not without his fears that these novelties would be ill received in the capital. He suspected it would be said, "The scene of this tragedy is a convent, Statira is a nun, Cassandra has made a general confession, and the Hierophante is a religious director, &c." But the judicious part of the audience restrained the frothy and illiterate, while nothing was regarded but its numerous beauties. With what emotion they beheld, in the third act, Cassandra shuddering while she recollects Statira; in the fourth, Olympie at the foot of the altar, in despair at her weakness, and repulsing Cassandra, who throws herself on her knees before her; and, lastly, in the fifth, the same Olympie throwing herself into the funeral pile, in sight of her terrified lovers, and of the priests, overwhelmed with grief and distraction. These situations, it is true, have not the same effect in the perusal, but tragedies are intended to be acted on the stage, and M. de Voltaire deserves our thanks

thanks for the pomp and decorations he has introduced into our theatres.

XXII. ADELAIDE DU GUESCLIN, 1765. Though we have already mentioned this piece, under the article of the *Duc de Foix*, we think it proper here to remark the differences between these two tragedies. The Duke de Foix is, here, the Duke de Vendome. Amelia is Adelaide, niece to the Constable du Guesclin. Vamir is the Duke de Nemours. Lisois the Sieur de Coucy. Emar is Dangeft, the confidant of Nemours: and the confidante is Taire in both. The subject of this tragedy is taken from the History of Bretagne. Jean de Montfort IV or V, who lived about the year 1387, had commanded a gentleman to murder the Constable of Clifton, but was soon after seized with remorse for his barbarous orders. Bavalan (for that was the name of the gentleman) foreseeing the regret of the Prince, served him better than he could have hoped, by not complying with his commands. The period of time is the reign of Charles VI. Adelaide du Guesclin is superior to the Duc de Foix; and the French names of the characters are more agreeable to the ear, and more conformable to the truth of history, than the names Emar and Vamir, which have a romantic sound. The character of the Duke de
Van-

Vendome, to whom Nemours is prisoner, has a ferocity which the violence of his passion and excess of his jealousy can scarcely enable us to support. The second scene of the third act, between Nemours and Adelaide, whom the former suspects to be false, is, in our opinion, the most excellent in the piece. In the third scene of the fifth act, a cannon is fired, as a signal to announce to the Duke de Vendome the death of his brother. This discharge of the cannon has a very good effect, but the event is too plainly foreseen for it to excite any terror in the audience; for, when the Sieur de Coucy has received orders to assassinate Nemours, it is too distinctly perceived he will not obey those orders. Adelaide was the last piece of M. de Voltaire which had an equivocal success: for *les Scythes*, *les Pelopides*, and *les Loix de Minos*, were very indifferently received; and they even have not all been acted.

XXIII. That we might not interrupt our account of the tragedies of M. de Voltaire, we have not yet spoken of several of his comedies. NANINE, acted in 1749, is only the novel of Pamela versified. The part of Nanine, and that of the Count, who is in love with her, are interesting, but they might have been much more so. The Baroness de Lorme, to whom the Count had promised

mised marriage, is one of those characters which we see on the stage, but seldom any where else. Though, even for the stage, it is a character not very proper, since it is neither sufficiently ridiculous nor sufficiently odious to produce effect. Madame d'Olban, the mother of the Count, is a simple boasting personage, intended to fill up the piece; her absurdities are indeed too trivial, and unsuitable to her birth. The rest are valets, who have nothing particular, except Philippe Hombert, the father of Nanine, who only appears at the denouement, but who is well drawn.

The first act is very naturally conducted, it is truly comic, and abounds in brilliant maxims and strong sententious lines, though not always well introduced. The sixth scene, between the Count and Nanine, is very affecting. The fifth of the second act has equal merit, but is almost the only good one in that act. The rest is frigid, ill conducted, and in an inferior style. An equivocal letter, as in *Zaïre*, where the words, "My dear farther," have been omitted at the top of the page, produces all the perplexity of the piece. Who could have imagined that a letter from a daughter to her father, from a young girl to an aged rustic, could ever have been mistaken for a billet doux. The author must have been very hard

hard put to it, to render the conduct of Nanine suspected, when he made her write a letter in such a style.

There are two excellent scenes in the third act, the second and the fifth. The second is equally comic and affecting. M. de Voltaire has hit the precise point requisite to unite these two styles, and form a third. This third, which has never been well executed in all its extent, does not consist (as M. Clement remarks) in being able to distribute pleasantries through one scene, and tears through another. That requires but little ingenuity, and is rather to disfigure than to unite; but to join in the same part the comic and the affecting, without weakening either, but, in reality, giving new strength to both. This is indeed art, and shows the great master. The extreme difficulty of effecting this cannot but greatly heighten the pleasure, from the surprize it produces; but how arduous the task to support this double part through five, or even through three acts!

The fifth scene, that of the denouement, is pathetic, and well unravelled, if we except a few interruptions from Madame d'Olban. Philippe Hombert is known to be the father of Nanine, of whom he had been imagined the secret lover, her innocence can no longer be doubted, and the Count, undeceived, resolves to sacrifice the Baroness to his affection for Nanine.

Some

Some have objected that the moral of the piece is dangerous, and tends to confound the different ranks of society, and produce unequal alliances. The amorous Count d'Olban advances, on this head, maxims equally contrary to the good order of a state and the subordination of families. But it is a lover who speaks thus; and we are less surprized at what he says, than at the facility with which the Countess, his mother, consents to his marriage.

Some have been also offended at the Count d'Olban, when he takes away from his mistress all the presents she had received, and deprives her of the genteel dress he had allotted her, to send her back to her own village in her original rustie attire. This behaviour has been censured as equally cruel and mean, and which we should be sorry to suppose possible in a man of quality.

XXIV. LA PRUDE, a comedy never acted, but at the theatre at Seeaux, under the protection of the Dukes du Maine. I know not why it has never been performed by the comedians of Paris, since, as the Abbé de la Porte remarks, it would most probably produce every good effect. It contains situations truly comic, artful, and delicate, more calculated to obtain the approbation of persons of taste than that of the multitude.

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The characters are well sustained, and properly diversified. Those of *Dorpbise* and *Blanfort* are, perhaps, too close imitations of those of *Tartuffe* and *Orgon*, in *l'Imposteur* of Moliere. We meet with the same love of virtue and probity, the same credulity and obstinacy in *Orgon* and in *Blanfort*, and the same hypocrisy and villainy in *Dorpbise* and in *Tartuffe*. The scene of the rendezvous, in which *Blanfort* discovers all the wickedness of his vile mistress, is too common to the theatre. Those detections, occasioned by the obscurity of night, have been so often repeated, on our stage, that they no longer give the same pleasure to the audience. But what pleases, in this piece, are those characters drawn from real life, and those sentiments which do honor to the abilities of M. de Voltaire, even in that kind of composition which seems least adapted to his genius.

The style of *La Prude* resembles that of *Nanine*, it is ingenious, but the versification is negligent; there are in it a number of harsh, weak, and prosaic verses, and some which are not French.

XXV. *LE CAFFÉ*, or *L'ÉCOSSAISE*, a comedy, of five acts, in prose, acted in 1760. It does not greatly abound in action, but, in recompence, contains a number of satirical strokes, which are com-

commonly more nervous than delicate. The epigrams scattered through it contributed powerfully, without doubt, to the success it met with, and which could not be greatly expected from perusal. But the style breaths an elegant simplicity and is interesting and comic. *Lindane*, the heroine of the piece, is affecting to every mind of sensibility. Polly, the chamber-maid, is diverting, and the character of Freeport, though not new, is excellent. This comedy met with its critics, but the author broke the force of the attack by praising it excessively in the preface.

“ The comedy of l'Ecoffaise, says he, may be
 “ pronounced one of those works which are cal-
 “ culated to succeed equally in all languages.
 “ In it is to be found the simplicity and propriety
 “ of the admirable Goldoni, with perhaps more
 “ intrigue, strength, and interest. The denoue-
 “ ment, the character of the heroine, and that
 “ of Freeport, resemble nothing we have before
 “ seen on the French stage. Yet are they drawn
 “ from pure nature. This piece seems a little in
 “ the style of the most esteemed English ro-
 “ mances. It abounds with similar touches, and
 “ like descriptions of manners. In it is nothing far-
 “ fetched, no ostentation of wit, from the author,
 “ when the character alone should be exhibited :
 “ nothing

“ nothing foreign to the subject; none of that
 “ scholastic parade, or those trivial maxims
 “ which so often supply the want of action. This,
 “ in justice, we think ourselves obliged to say of
 “ our celebrated author.

“ We confess, at the same time, that, in conformity to the opinion of several judicious persons, we think the part of Frelon might be retrenched. He appears in the last acts, and is punished, as is reasonable, at the end of the piece; but this justice seems, in some measure, to cool the attention then naturally directed to the dénouement.

“ Besides, the character of Frelon is so mean and odious that we would wish to spare the reader the too frequent view of such an object, more disgusting than comic; though we must allow it is to be found in Nature.”

It is difficult to admit the truth of this, taking the character such as it is described by the author of *l'Ecoffaïse*. His Frelon is an impudent rascal, such as certainly is not to be found among our men of literature.

XXVI. *LE DROIT DU SEIGNEUR*, a comedy, acted in 1762, had not such brilliant success as *l'Ecoffaïse*, though in several particulars this is the best piece. The language is indeed very negligent.

negligent. It contains verses in which both the pause and the rhyme are wholly violated, but it also has passages extremely pathetic and elegant. The Marquis du Carrage is an accomplished philosopher, who abounds in the most noble sentiments, and gives additional force to his doctrine by his example. The other characters are to be found in other comedies or romances; but the author has had the art to make them appear new, by a variety of excellent thoughts, scattered through their parts, by easy and elegant dialogue, and by the sentiments they deliver. These latter may, perhaps, be too numerous; but a defect so agreeable is easily excused.

XXVII. LA FEMME QUI A RAISON. A piece acted at the theatre of Carouge, near Geneva, in 1758, but which has never been performed at Paris. As the author has not admitted it into the collection of his dramatic pieces, an honor of which, indeed, it was not worthy, we shall here give a brief account of the plot. Madame Duru, a lady of fashion, married to a citizen of that name, by whom she has two children, a son and daughter, takes advantage of the absence of her husband, who is increasing his fortune in India, to alter her style of living to a manner more suitable to her opulence. The Marquis d'Outremont

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conceives a passion for her daughter, and she is desirous to see them united, but waits the consent of her father. A correspondent of the husband's, who enjoys the confidence of M. Duru, on the other hand, wishes his daughter to marry the son of Duru; and Philpot, his son, the daughter. During this contest, of marriages proposed and rejected, M. Duru arrives from India; and, still a thorough tradesman in his manners, scarcely knows his own family, in the midst of so much politeness and splendor. After having indulged a little in his parsimonious humor, Madame Duru convinces him of the use which reason requires we should make of our wealth, and proves herself *La Femme qui a raison*; or, A Wife in the right.

XXVIII. It now only remains to speak of M. de Voltaire's lyric poetry, which was not that in which he most excelled, as he himself has confessed.

The public was nearly of the same opinion on the appearance of his Samson and Pandore. One of these was set to music by Rameau, and one of our ablest musicians is, it is said, now resetting the other. "Pandore, (says M. de Voltaire, in a letter to a friend) is not a well written, but it may be made a splendid entertainment, and is not ill adapted to music. It is
" full.

“ full of duo’s, trios, and chorusses. It is, be-
 “ fides, a philosophical opera, which ought to be
 “ acted in the presence of Bayle and Diderot. It
 “ treats of the origin of moral and physical evil.
 “ Jupiter, indeed, has no very commendable
 “ part : he wants nothing but his two tons. An
 “ indifferent musician, named Royer, has com-
 “ posed almost all the music of this whimsical
 “ piece.” Pandore died with him, and we now
 wait its resurrection ; some critics believe this im-
 possible, but they, perhaps, are too fastidious.

S K E T C H
O F T H E
C H A R A C T E R
O F
M. D E V O L T A I R E,
C O N S I D E R E D A S A
D R A M A T I C P O E T.

M. D E V O L T A I R E very early perceived the beauties and defects of our tragic scene. Corneille, an ancient Roman among the French, a noble, rapid and profound genius, appeared to him full of the most barbarous irregularities. Racine, more elegant and tender, was frequently deficient in strength and interest. Crebillon had opened to himself a new path, by that tragic terror which marks his compositions; but he staggered at every step, when the subject did not accord with his particular genius. M. de Voltaire, who had the gift of good taste, a ductile mind, enlightened by philosophy, and a feeling heart, imagined the public favor could only be ensured by uniting

uniting the distinguishing characteristics of those three great masters of the French stage. He determined to think like Corneille, write like Racine, and shake the soul like Crébillon. This project was worthy the Alexander of literature. He may not always have been equal to so vast a design, but it must be confessed he has often succeeded; and succeeded so well that his best pieces (*Zaïre* and *Alzire* for example) have drawn more numerous audiences than any of the works of our greatest tragic poets. "He does not merely please (says a certain writer) he enchants."

But whence arises this indescribable charm? From his brilliant descriptions, his noble sentiments, and bold, nervous, and sublime thoughts. Such is the character of the style of M. de Voltaire, than which none can be better adapted to tragedy. What sweetness, what elegance, what harmony, what colouring! It must appear surprising that the lustre of his imagination should not enfeeble the pathos, to be found in all his pieces. He is tender and affecting, yet not the less elegant or less ingenious; he, at once, touches the heart and delights the understanding. Those who have taste enough to relish his exquisite beauties will be tempted to agree with us, in readily allowing him genius, which so many critics have denied him to possess; for he unites
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the brilliant and the pathetic; he feels and he reflects; and it is that combination, as a certain philosopher has observed, which constitutes the man of genius. One eulogium cannot be refused M. de Voltaire, and is, perhaps, exclusively his own; which is, that if his verses be divested of their measure, we shall still find a nervous and elegant prose: make the same experiment on other tragic poets, and some will appear barbarous, and others languid.

Though this praise has been allowed to the poetry and prose of M. de Voltaire, he has been censured for too much neglecting the analogy of his ideas, and that imperceptible connexion, which, by artfully uniting the different parts of a work, renders its perusal delightful. It has been objected that almost all his verses, disjoined and detached, present themselves, as it were, one by one. But it seems scarcely possible to do otherwise, when we wish to write lofty and sonorous verses, especially in the French language; a language embarrassed with articles, incapable of inflexions, poor in poetical terms and nervous expressions, subjected to the eternal monotony of rhyme, and yet affording no rhymes suitable to sublime subjects.

Those, therefore, who would give strength to our prosaic and monotonous poetry are under an
indis-

indispensable necessity of writing in single lines, or couplets. M. de Voltaire has perceived this, and repaired the fault, if it be one, by endeavoring to intermix long and short periods, by varying the measure, avoiding common expressions, too frequent conjunctions, repetitions of the same word, and, above all, rhiming on epithets.

Other critics have denied our poet the talent of invention. They have declared him incapable of forming a connected whole, and that, possessing no originality, he is only able to polish and decorate subjects which have been attempted before by others. But, if these attempts have failed, why should it be forbidden a writer, of genius, to treat them in a superior manner? Besides, there are tragedies which are entirely his own, *Alzire* for example; and these have not been the pieces received least favorably by the public.

It has also been pretended that M. de Voltaire, in order to ensure success to his theatrical productions, has made use of means never thought of by the great poets of the last age. Had he a piece, it has been said, to appear on the stage, he supported it with more artifice and industry than if the object in view were to prevent the fall of an empire. But in what cabals could he engage after his retirement to Fernei? And, since that time, the worst things he has written have been

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